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[RETRIBUTION.]

A LIFE AT STAKE.

BY LEON LEWIS.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Thou may'st repent,
And one had act, with many deeds well done,
May'st cover.

Milton.

For a moment Shawcross continued to look about him with the wild glare of a hunted beast. He did not dare to return to Nelly's chamber, lest his daughter should betray his presence there and deliver him up to his supposed enemies. His one thought, his one prayer, was to see her, and beseech her to deny all knowledge of his whereabouts. As he stood, thus agonized, with a cold dew on his forehead, and his knees knocking together, his gaze suddenly fell upon a half-open door at the right of the wide hall, and close at hand. Through the aperture he caught a glimpse of a lighted and luxurious boudoir, such as could belong alone to the mistress of the dwelling.

Nelly must be within that room. She had said she was going to Lady Chellis's apartments. If he could only see the girl he felt sure that she would save him.

These thoughts passed swiftly through his mind, and, with a wild impulse to throw himself upon the mercy of his daughter, before she could be summoned to attend her master and mistress in the drawing-room, he stepped forward to the door, and called out, quickly and sharply:

"Nelly!"

There was no response.

"She must be here," he said to himself in a hushed whisper. "I know she is here!"

He pushed open the door softly and looked in. The room was bathed in a soft glow of light; two easy-chairs were drawn up before the hearth, upon which a small fire sparkled cheerily, for although a spring night it was chilly without; the curtains completely concealed the windows. It seemed ready for occupancy, but as yet was untenanted.

He drew a sobbing sort of sigh.

A door at the opposite side of the room attracted his attention. Without a moment's hesitation, he softly crossed the room, and looked into the adjoining chamber. It was the dressing-room of Lady Chellis, and was also brilliantly lighted, wax-candles gleaming from silver sconces on the mantelpiece, and from the tall, glittering candelabra, whose glass pendants reflected the light like great jewels.

But Nelly was not there.

Shawcross looked upon the luxurious scene, scarcely comprehending it. He saw that there was still an inner chamber, probably a bed-room, and he was about to penetrate it, in his utter desperation, when his attention was attracted to the lace-draped dressing-table, upon which lay a large ebony jewel-case.

It was open, as Nelly had left it an instant before, and his eager gaze caught the sparkle and glitter of liquid diamonds, the soft glimmer of pearls, the purple gleam of great amethysts, the deep glow of emeralds, and the crimson fire of burning carbuncles.

It was a sight to attract attention, and, perhaps, it is scarcely to be wondered at that the fugitive lost sight for a moment of the object of his search and crept nearer, with stealthy and guilty movements.

How mockingly, yet how temptingly, the jewels sparkled, glowed, and gleamed, in the soft, full light. He crept very close, feasting his eyes, and thinking what a mine of wealth he had stumbled upon. He took up in his hands the sparkling jewels that had been pledged to Sir Hugh, in lieu of the promised money, and held them in his great horny fingers, exulting in the glorious flashing of rays, the grand coronation of colour, and their perfect reflection of light.

"If I had only this," he muttered, his eyes brightening, "I should be rich so long as I live. Lady Chellis wouldn't miss it. I should never have to thieve again. I could be as honest as anyone, and be respected, and have the comforts of life!"

He paused, a vague idea crossing his mind that he might ruin the prospects of his daughter by appro-

priating anything that had been placed in her charge. It also occurred to him that it would be the worst of crimes to violate the unconscious hospitality of the lady at whose expense he had been fed and refreshed. But Shawcross was not a man long to entertain delicate scruples of honour.

"The thing is here," he said to himself, "right in my way, and I'd be a fool not to take it. Let Nelly look after herself as I've done. I can't find the girl; I haven't a minute to spare; and I must escape at once. I have no money—I must take the necklace!"

He turned his back resolutely upon the remaining gems, opened his shabby jacket, and prepared to consign the fiery, sparkling necklace to some secret hiding-place about his person.

It trembled in his hands, which shook like great brown leaves in the autumn wind, when the door of the bed-chamber opened, and Nelly unexpectedly made her appearance.

Caught in the very act of robbing his daughter's benefactress, the guilty man stood transfixed, the costly ornament falling to his feet in a glittering heap.

Nelly stood on the threshold for a moment appalled. Then, comprehending the case, she leaped forward, with a cry like that a mother might give when robbed of her babes, and caught up the string of jewels with one hand, while, with the other, she clutched her father fiercely by the arm.

"You ungrateful man!" she cried, indignantly. "What do you mean by this treachery? You would rob my mistress, would you? I've a great mind to summon the servants, and give you up as a thief and robber that you are!"

"Oh, don't, Nelly!" cried her father, overcome with terror at the threat. "I wasn't going to rob anybody. I—I was only looking at it!"

"What are you doing in these rooms?" demanded the girl, harshly, restoring the ornament to the jewel-case, and locking the latter securely.

"I came in search of you, Nelly. They've tracked me here. Your master said he would send for you and ask you if you had seen me. I heard them at

the top of the stairs. Tell them you haven't seen me, Nelly, and don't know where I am."

"I shall not tell a falsehood!" replied Nelly, coldly. "If Sir Hugh asks me, I shall say that you have been here."

"You will betray me, will you?" half shrieked the wretched being.

"No, for I shall not know where you are. You must leave here at once. I would not harbour you under this roof another hour for all the wealth of Croesus. If you had gone away with that necklace of my lady's, I should have killed myself. I will never forgive your treachery and ingratitude—"

"But you will help me?" interrupted her father, who did not care for forgiveness, so long as he received the aid he needed.

"Yes, I will help you. Come back to my room."

She turned abruptly and led him by the way he had come to the hall. Here they paused a moment, hearing voices below, and fearing that someone might ascend the stairs in time to see the fugitive.

"We must move boldly," declared Nelly, almost as pale as her father, but far more self-possessed.

With a quick, light step she hastened along the hall, Shawcross keeping at her side. He was in a panic of excitement and did not breathe freely until they had gained the precincts of the girl's chamber.

"Stay here till I come for you!" said the girl. "I must see if the back entrance is clear for your escape. If you leave the room before I come, you will do so at your peril!"

"You—you are not going to betray me?" faltered Shawcross.

His daughter answered only by a look of scorn, and withdrew from the room. The miserable man crouched behind the door during her absence, with a desperate look in his eyes, and with his ears applied closely to the chink above the lower hinge, that he might hear every sound in the corridor.

The murmur of voices came to his hearing; one of them he distinguished as that of his daughter.

"Sir Hugh desires you to come to the drawing-room, Miss Nelly," someone was saying.

"I will come directly," Nelly responded, quietly, "as soon as I've smoothed my hair a bit."

Then the speakers moved away, and Shawcross was left to solitude and misery. The minutes passed, dragging on like hours, to the guilty fugitive, and at last Nelly returned, paler than before, but more quiet.

"The servants are in the lower hall," she said, "and you cannot escape by the front door. The back hall, by which we entered, is occupied by several of the men and women, who are discussing the probability of your being in the house, and wondering what you have done and why you are wanted. The garden door is locked, and Watkins has been summoned to the drawing-room. Every door, you see, is guarded, and you cannot even get down stairs!"

Shawcross uttered a wild, wailing cry, and rocked himself to and fro in his anguish. Never very strong-minded, his faculties seemed almost to desert him under the present combination of untoward circumstances, and he could only weep and moan.

"Hush!" said his daughter, in a quick, decided tone, that had the effect of a sudden douche bath upon him. "Don't be foolish. I did not say there was no way of escape. I hurried out into the garden, and found a long ladder, which the gardener had been using to-day while training the ivy-vines. It is tall enough to reach my window, so I dragged it along, and leaned it against the house. Do you think you can descend the ladder?"

"Yes, yes," cried Shawcross, catching eagerly at the prospect of escape. "I know I can!"

Nelly looked doubtfully at the trembling figure, whose strength had departed during his years of excess and dissipation. He was, physically, but the wreck of a man, and did not seem to have sufficient vigour or steadiness for the task of climbing. Trusting that his excitement would lend him artificial strength, the girl proceeded to the window, pushed it up softly, and looked out.

The night was moderately dark, there being no moon, and but a few stars visible. The lawn was darkened by the thick shadows of the trees and the grove that bordered it. There was no person within sight. For all these favouring circumstances Nelly breathed a prayer of thankfulness.

"Go now, father," she said, withdrawing her head. "The ladder is set firmly. Be careful not to fall, for there is a paved walk underneath. Now go."

"But the money, Nelly?"

The girl took from her pocket a small portemonnaie, which she placed silently in his hands. Even at that moment he could not resist the impulse to open it, fearful that she might be deceiving him. The gleam of gold and the rustling of bank-notes rewarded his search, and, muttering his thanks, he put the gift in his pocket.

Then he advanced to the window, and looked out. "It's a long way down, Nelly," he said, shivering and trembling. "I wish I could walk out the way I came."

"But you can't, father."

"I might fall, you know," he said, when he had placed one leg over the window-sill. "It's a long time since I climbed. I think I haven't since I was a boy. I—I am afraid, Nelly."

He looked up into the girl's face, hoping that she would suggest some easier mode of exit, but she replied to his pleading look with a gaze so cold and stern that he shrank from her, muttering that she looked strangely like her dead mother.

With some effort and much trepidation, Shawcross dragged his other leg over the window-sill and stood leaning upon the casement, his feet resting upon the third round of the ladder.

He seemed strangely loth to depart. The unaccustomed mode of descent struck terror to his soul. He feared he should fall. He had not a good footing, and his hands trembled so that he could hardly cling to the windows. He was sure he could never cling to those narrow rounds, that his hands had not sufficient "grip" in them to close firmly around them.

All these things he urged, as he hung there, in trembling tones, and whitening face.

"Come in then, father," said Nelly, impatiently. "I am sure I can't think of any other way to get you out."

At this juncture a peremptory knock sounded on Nelly's door, and the voice of one of the servants loudly informed her that Sir Hugh had expressed surprise at her non-appearance and had again sent to summon her attendance, adding:

"If you don't come, they will come up to you. I think they are coming now."

Shawcross uttered a ringing shriek, partly because of his horror at this intelligence, and partly because, in his first surprise, he had started violently, and so loosened his hold on the window.

He endeavoured to recover his balance, to brace anew his feet, but his hand slipped, he tottered, and leaned outward, falling headlong to the ground.

His shriek was echoed by his affrighted daughter, who frantically opened her door, and rushed down the stairs to his assistance.

The servants, comprehending something of the truth from the double shriek, and the girl's wildness, followed closely behind her.

"Dead, dead!" cried Nelly, as she gained the paved path upon which her father lay, helpless and motionless, and knelt beside him.

A faint groan issued from his lips.

"He is not dead," said she, with hysterical tears and laughter. "Somebody go for a doctor. What shall I do with him?"

Instead of replying to this question, the averted servants moved aside respectfully, giving place to Sir Hugh Chellis and Lord Tressilian, who had heard the disturbance and hastened to learn its cause.

"It is Nelly's father, who has fallen from the ladder, Sir Hugh," said Baker, the footman, in a very low tone.

"It is Shawcross—found at last," said Lord Tressilian.

The injured man opened his eyes feebly and looked up with a pleading expression.

"Lift him carefully and carry him into the front hall," commanded Sir Hugh, promptly. "Bring a mattress, some of you."

Three or four of the servants sprang to do their young master's bidding. The baronet then stooped down to the wounded man, and said:

"No one shall hurt you, Shawcross. You shall be lifted very carefully."

"It is not that," whispered the fugitive. "Don't send me to prison. Don't let them take me up for the murder. I am innocent—"

"Have no fears," said Sir Hugh, gently. "You are not going to prison now. If you wish it, I will be your friend."

The mattress had now arrived, and Shawcross was carefully placed upon it—the operation costing him little pain, as he felt benumbed—and carried to the front hall, and there deposited upon a broad couch, in front of which two chairs were placed.

Restoratives were administered to him by Sir Hugh and Lord Tressilian, and the former dispatched a servant at once to West Hoxton, with orders to bring back with him a physician and a magistrate.

The throng of servants were waved back from the rude couch, and the young viscount, bending over the injured man, regarded him with a look so earnest and full of emotion that Shawcross looked at him in wonder.

"Why do you look at me so?" he asked, uneasily. "Are the men going to carry me to prison?" Lord Tressilian shook his head, and returned:

"What men?"

"The men who came here for me a little while ago."

"I came for you, but I am alone," said his lordship. "I did not come to take you to prison. I have been searching for you during the past week in London, and have offered rewards for you, and have advertised everywhere. I followed you from town, two of your companions having put me on your track. But you need not be afraid of me. I shall not harm you."

Shawcross wonderingly and feebly expressed his gratitude.

"I shall not harm you," continued Lord Tressilian, in clear, sweet tones that were as soothing as evening chimes, "and you have nothing to fear from anyone else on earth. But are you prepared to enter the other world, Shawcross—that world where sin and guilt are punished, if not repented of and atoned for here?"

"I am not going to die," moaned Shawcross, his lips quivering with sudden dread. "I am not in pain. I think I didn't get hurt. Nothing ails me, only I feel numb!"

"It is the numbness of death that is creeping over you!" declared Lord Tressilian, solemnly and pityingly.

Shawcross uttered a groan of anguish, and cried out that it could not be true, that he was not in pain, and that he would soon be well. He attempted to rise upon his elbow, but could not lift himself an inch from the mattress. Then he turned a wild, questioning look about him and encountered the solemn faces of Sir Hugh and Lord Tressilian and the fearful ones of Lady Chellis and his daughter Nelly.

That brief survey brought the truth home to his soul.

"Oh, I can't die," he said, the tears forcing themselves through his now half-shut eyelids. "I am not fit to die. I have been wicked all my life—"

"Better a late repentance and partial atonement than none at all!" said Lord Tressilian. "You have been sinful and wicked, but you can restore peace to a household to which you have assisted to bring grief; you can raise an almost dying man to renewed life and hope; and you can fill several hearts with gladness. This is the errand on which I have sought you everywhere, and which I now deliver to you, imploring you, as you wish for mercy in the world you are about to enter, to show mercy here!"

"How?"

Lord Tressilian drew nearer to the dying man, and said, in the same earnest, solemn tones:

"Shawcross, you are one of three conspirators against Sir Allyn Dare. Therwell is one, and Hoadley is the second. Sir Allyn is accused of an impossible crime, which you pretend to have witnessed. I implore you to make a full confession of the truth. Do not carry this secret into eternity with you!"

Shawcross listened in a violent fit of trembling, his face growing more and more ghastly.

"I cannot tell," he muttered.

"Father, for my sake!" pleaded Nelly, bending her tearful face nearer to that of her parent. "Do not die with a guilty secret on your soul. Have mercy upon poor Miss Dare and her father. Surely, if you do Sir Allyn justice, the good deed will be set down to your credit above?"

"Do you think so?" asked Shawcross, eagerly, of Lord Tressilian.

The young viscount, not knowing how else to reply, and devoutly hoping that Nelly's pious wish might have touched upon the truth, bowed in silence.

"I'll see, then. Perhaps I won't die. I'll hear what the doctor says first!"

To this decision Shawcross adhered. No persuasions could induce him to make a confession until the arrival of the physician, and Lord Tressilian and Sir Hugh finally left him to himself, walking up and down the hall, arm in arm, in close conversation. Lady Chellis took up her post at the head of the improvised couch, Nelly knelt beside it and whispered to her father of the mercy extended to repentant sinners.

Half an hour passed, and then the doctor and magistrate arrived together. The death-damps were already gathering upon the brow of Shawcross, and it needed no experienced eye to tell that his hours were numbered. The physician looked at him, made a few inquiries, then gravely shook his head, and turned away.

No word was needed to tell Shawcross of his fate.

"Strange affair this, Sir Hugh!" said the magistrate, who had been one of the neighbours to welcome the baronet and his bride on their return upon the previous night. "Everything strange seems to be happening now-a-days. First Lady Chellis is abducted, and then it comes out that she was never insane. Then this burglar gets killed. And this afternoon a strange mystery was revealed to me. A man named Therwell, who was secretary to the late Sir Allyn Dare, and who has been engaged to marry Miss Dare, appeared before me and

declared that the present baronet had poisoned his own father! An incredible story. He says he has witnesses, and one of them is an innkeeper whom Sir Allyn has paid handsomely to keep the secret. Therwell wanted Sir Allyn apprehended, and, when I refused to do so, he threatened to go to town about it."

"What did you do?"

"I've sent a couple of constables over to apprehend Sir Allyn," said the magistrate, gloomily. "Of course the baronet can clear himself. The charge is preposterous. But, on the evidence offered, though I held out a long time, I was obliged at last to arrest him."

Shawcross had listened to this low-toned conversation, every word of which had been understood by him. Now he raised one hand feebly and beckoned the magistrate nearer.

"Sir Allyn is innocent," he said, in a failing voice. "I am the third witness against him. I never thought that Therwell would go so far. I am ready to confess everything!"

Nelly kissed him approvingly, and Lord Tressilian pressed his hand in gratitude.

Paper and ink were brought and the magistrate took his seat at the bedside to receive the dying deposition of Shawcross.

He told his story feebly, and in brief, terse sentences, compelled by his waning strength to say what he had to say in as few words as possible. He knew that he was dying, and his heart shrank at the last from carrying with him into the other world a secret upon which depended a human life. It was all told at last and written out. The magistrate then read the confession aloud, and Shawcross, with some difficulty, from the tremulousness of his fingers, signed his name. The witnesses then appended their signatures.

"I feel happier already," said the dying man, as his hand fell to his side. "One of my sins is atoned for as well as it can be. Oh, if this one good deed at last might outweigh my many sins!"

Nelly whispered words of comfort to him.

Sir Hugh beckoned to his young wife, and whispered to her as she joined him. "The carriage is ready, my love. We are to set out directly for Edencourt, which we hope to reach in time to save Sir Allyn and his daughter from any serious annoyance. Your presence may be of comfort to Miss Dare. Will you go?"

Lady Chellis assented and hastened to throw round her a shawl and to tie on her bonnet. She was conducted to the carriage by her husband, Lord Tressilian and the magistrate following them, taking their seats opposite. The little party then, with joyful hearts, drove quickly towards Edencourt, impatient to impart the glorious tidings gained by Shawcross's confession.

CHAPTER XL.

When the clouds have poured their rain
Sweeter smell the flowers;
Brightest shine heaven's starry train
In earth's sunless hours.
Tribulation—patience works
Hope from whence we borrow;
Such the hidden good that lurks
In dark days of sorrow. *Bernard Barton.*

THE hours succeeding the departure of Therwell upon his mission of revenge passed drearily enough to Sir Allyn Dare and his daughter. Each was anxious to encourage and inspire the other, but their hearts were heavy with dread and foreboding. Hilda assured her father, with some faith in her own words, that no magistrate could be found who would for a moment consider any charge against him, and, as the day passed and they remained unmolested, Sir Allyn began to hope that he should be spared the humiliation of arrest and the disgrace of a public trial for murder.

Hilda did not leave her father during the day, even to change her attire. As he complained of being cold, she caused a fire to be kindled in the state drawing-room, and he sat near it all the day, seldom stirring except to accompany his family to the dining-room. But he did not relapse into his former nervousness and despair. Quiet and self-possessed, he yet fully comprehended his situation, and at last dared to look his difficulties bravely in the face. The weakness of years had been thrown aside for ever.

Kate Arsdale and Mrs. Amry, whose revelations had wrought such a change in Hilda's prospects, and who was now regarded as a true friend, remained with the baronet and his daughter, striving, by a kind of forced cheerfulness, to dissipate the gloom that hung heavily over both.

Thus the day passed, and evening came.

The lamps were lighted in the pendant chandeliers, shedding forth a flood of radiance; the great bay window was shut off from the main apartment by thick curtains of brocaded silk; the fire behind

the glittering bars of the grate burned cheerily, adding a little to the heat that came in through invisible tubes, and giving an air of comfort that can never be attained by a hidden fire.

"May we not hope at last, papa?" asked Hilda, bending over Sir Allyn's chair and caressing his thin, pale brow shaded by snow-white locks.

The baronet smiled faintly, but shook his head. "We must be prepared for the worst," he said.

There was a long silence, during which the baronet gazed thoughtfully into the fire and Hilda leaned against his chair, while at a little distance Kate Arsdale and Mrs. Amry appeared equally lost in abstraction.

The silence was broken at length by the ringing of horses' hoofs upon the gravelled avenue, and soon after Vincent Therwell entered, accompanied by two constables.

"Did you think I had forgotten you?" asked the former, mockingly. "I could not resist the impulse to return with these men, and see how you and your daughter took your change of fortune."

One of the constables uttered a low reproof for this unseemly exultation over the fallen baronet, and then, as the latter arose and stood erect, his arms folded on his breast, he read aloud the warrant of arrest.

"I shall make no resistance," said Sir Allyn, quietly.

"I shall go with him," declared Hilda, resolutely, a scarlet flush kindling upon her pale cheeks. "You will not separate us?"

The constable informed her that he had no authority to take her; that her request was unprecedented, and that a jail was not a fit lodging for one so delicately nurtured as the daughter of Sir Allyn Dare. Quietly setting aside his objections, and the expostulations of her father, the young girl ordered a shawl and bonnet to be brought to her, and declared her place to be at her father's side, asserting that he was not well enough to bear the removal and anxiety alone.

"If Sir Allyn Dare be ill, that makes a difference," said the chief constable, compassionately, losing all faith in the monstrous charge against the baronet as he marked the calm demeanour of the latter and the ill-concealed exultation of Therwell. "We could wait until he feels better, but we must not lose sight of him!"

Therwell protested against any delay, but his words were unheeded.

The two constables were willing to overstep the boundaries of strict duty to comfort the stricken father and daughter, and Hilda thanked them with a grateful smile that more than repaid them for their unusual kindness.

To prolong their stay as much as possible, she ordered them to be served with ale and simple refreshments, of which they partook with a hearty relish, despite the angry remonstrance of Sir Allyn's accuser.

A little time was thus gained for consultation between the baronet and his daughter. They were in the midst of a discussion about counsel when carriage-wheels were heard coming up the broad avenue, and both started, as if apprehensive of another blow.

The new arrival was that of the party from Monrepos.

They were ushered into the drawing-room, Lord Tressilian foremost, eager to cheer the heart of Hilda, the magistrate next, anxious to prevent annoyance to Sir Allyn from the constables, and, lastly, Sir Hugh and Lady Chellis, equally eager to supplant the present sorrow of Sir Allyn Dare and Hilda with a pure and lasting joy.

Hilda uttered a joyful exclamation, and permitted her lover to clasp her in his arms, unconscious that Therwell was scowling darkly upon their embrace.

The magistrate advanced to Sir Allyn, shook his hand warmly, and said:

"You must forgive me, my old friend, for sending that warrant. It was, in a manner, forced from me. I never for an instant really believed you guilty, but things did look suspicious, and I should have been blamed if I had passed over the evidence unnoticed."

"You are forgiven," said Sir Allyn, wonderingly. "Hilda, give me the warrant," said the magistrate.

The constable, in some surprise, handed over the document, and the magistrate quietly laid it upon the fire.

"There," he said; "you need apprehend no more annoyance, Sir Allyn. Can you bear good news? Shawcross lies at the point of death, and has made a full confession of the conspiracy against you."

The baronet, faint and almost overcome, sank into his chair, speechless with joy. Hilda flew to him and wept and laughed in her delight. Therwell muttered a curse, and attempted to glide from the room, but, at a signal from the magistrate, the constables

who had kept a watch upon him, intercepted his movements and detained him prisoner.

"I can hardly believe it," said Sir Allyn, as soon as he could command his voice. "Shawcross has confessed? You are not deceiving me, I hope?"

"I will read the confession," said the magistrate. "It was made but a few minutes since, and at this moment Shawcross may be dead. Listen."

He took from his pocket the confession, to the truth of which the dying Shawcross had sworn, stood under the chandelier, and proceeded to read as follows:

"I, Holton Shawcross, am dying. With my last breath I desire to do justice to an innocent man who has been accused of an awful crime. Ten years ago, in the course of my professional duties, I was called upon to act as nurse to the late Sir Allyn Dare, father of the present baronet of the same name. The present baronet, then Mr. Allyn Dare, was a wild young man, with a great many debts. His father was a severe old gentleman who allowed his son a certain allowance, and utterly refused to pay his debts or increase the allowance when he went beyond it. These facts I learned before I had been in the house twenty-four hours. I also discovered that Vincent Therwell, the late baronet's secretary, had established a strong influence over his employer, but that no one else liked him. Mr. Allyn especially detested him, and Therwell hated Mr. Allyn."

"I had been at Edencourt several weeks, during which time I had learned a great deal more about the family. Sir Allyn took opium every day, and this habit greatly aggravated his malady. He kept the fact secret, his valet, Hoadley, procuring the drug for him. Therwell knew it, and so did I, but the physician and Mr. Allyn did not suspect it."

"One afternoon—it was the twenty-second of April, and a dreary, rainy day—I had been waiting upon the invalid as usual. Hoadley, the valet, was with me. Sir Allyn had apparently fallen asleep, and Hoadley and I sat down in the shadow of the curtain at one side of the bed. We were almost hidden from observation. Therwell came in, and his coming awakened the baronet. Therwell went up to him and told him a long story about Mr. Allyn's extravagancies, and hinted that Mr. Allyn had told him that he wished his father dead. Sir Allyn was dreadfully enraged."

"He sent for his son directly. There was a fearful scene between father and son. Mr. Allyn denied what Therwell had said, but Sir Allyn refused to believe him. He ordered his son to take his wife and child and leave the house within the hour. Mr. Allyn declared he would not go."

"The baronet wore himself out with his fury at last. He called me to give him a composing draught the doctor had left for him. I got up, trembling and frightened, and went to the bed. Mr. Allyn was standing beside it, and behind him was Therwell. There were two bottles on the medicine-stand, one with the composing draught, the other with the laudanum."

"I was bewildered. I never meant to do it. So surely as I live, I did not mean to take the wrong bottle. But I did. I poured out a draught of the laudanum and brought it to the baronet. He was too excited to notice the difference, the colour being the same."

"He took the poison and fell asleep. Mr. Allyn watched him awhile, his anger vanishing when he saw how pale and cold his father looked. Then he knelt down beside him, hid his face in the blankets and cried."

"Therwell looked at the blanket, smelled the glass into which I had poured the medicine, then came and whispered to Hoadley and me. He said that Sir Allyn was dead and that I had killed him. He said he hated Mr. Allyn and wanted revenge. He promised Hoadley and me money if we would say that Mr. Allyn had poisoned his father. I was afraid and I agreed to do so. Hoadley wanted money, and he also agreed."

"Sir Allyn never woke. When his son got off his knees he saw that his father was dead. Then Therwell stepped up to him, while he was stupefied, and accused him of poisoning the old gentleman. And Hoadley and I said we had seen him put something into the glass, not suspecting it was poison. The poor young man was horrified. He declared his innocence. But we were three against one."

"Mr. Allyn had a proud, sweet young wife, and a lovely little daughter. He could not bring shame upon them. He hadn't a great deal of courage. He saw three of us ready to swear away his life. The doctors could prove his father died by poison. He knew not what to do. And so, to keep us silent, and to preserve his honour, he signed a compact that Therwell drew up, and Hoadley and I were the witnesses."

"Besides all these reasons, Mr. Allyn had another that would have told against him. In his anger

at his father's unreasonableness, he had made serious threats that would have convinced many of his guilt.

"The end was—he signed the compact. Afterwards, he gave me money, and I went away from Edenville, for I couldn't bear to see his face after I had wronged him. He is innocent, I swear it, with my dying breath. And the guilt, if guilt there was, was mine. I also declare that Vincent Therwell and William Hoadley forced me into this conspiracy against the present Sir Allyn Dare under the penalty of giving me up on a charge of murder."

That was all, except the signature. But it was enough to lift a terrible weight of woe from the poor, weak baronet's heart; enough to thrill Ildes's soul with a sweeter and more intense happiness than she had ever felt; enough to inspire Lord Tressilian with tender pity for the wronged Sir Allyn; and enough to take away for ever the cloud from the house of Dare.

The party thronged about the baronet, overwhelming him with their congratulations. For some moments a miniature Babel reigned. But when the confusion had subsided the magistrate said:

"It may be some comfort to you, Sir Allyn, to punish your enemy as he deserves. He can be indicted for conspiracy."

"No," interrupted the baronet, his gentle face altogether transfigured by his happiness, "I do not wish to make this unhappy affair public. I am free at last, and will leave his punishment to an avenging heaven. Let him go!"

Therwell was expelled with ignominy from the mansion of which he had expected on the morrow to be the master.

Then Sir Allyn turned to Lady Chellis and thanked her anew for her efficient assistance in his darkest hour. He next took the hand of Lord Tressilian, and said:

"Gay, it is to you that I owe this confession of Shawcross. If you had not pursued him and tracked him to Monrepos, I should have slept to-night in a felon's cell. I cannot find words to thank you sufficiently. But this shall be your reward!"

He took one hand of the blushing Ildes and laid it in that of Lord Tressilian.

The gift thus bestowed was ratified a few weeks later in the little church of Edenville by the good clergyman who had known her from her infancy. The young couple were married on a lovely, sun-lit morning, and never did a fairer bride wear an orange wreath than Ildes Dare, nor a prouder, handsomer bridegroom kneel before the altar than Lord Tressilian.

That sunny bridal morning bade fair to become the emblem of their united lives.

Sir Allyn Dare has recovered his strength and has gained renewed vigour. He has taken his place again in the world among men of his age and position, and his children are growing prouder of him every day. The shadows of the past are all dissipated, and he looks at life now with unclouded gaze, and wonders sometimes at his past weaknesses and follies.

Kate Aradale has left Edencourt for a home of her own, but Ildes still cherishes her as a sister.

Mrs. Amry has a pleasant home at Edencourt, where she expects always to remain. Her daughter, Annie Therwell, died in the asylum, breathing out her life gently, and never awakening to a remembrance of her past sufferings.

Sir Hugh and Lady Chellis, whose destiny had been so strangely interwoven at the last with that of the Dares, concluded, from their increasing happiness, that their marriage had been the result of a divine and blessed providence. Miss Dorothy, who still lives, and still delights in caustic speeches, coincides with them in this opinion, and has finally made her will in her grand-nephew's favour, leaving the heathen natives of Africa to flourish in their original costumes. She resides with Sir Hugh and Adah, part of the time at Hawk's Nest, and the rest of the time at Monrepos, and continues as keen and sharp-sighted as on the occasion of her memorable interview with Mr. Wilmer.

Of that unhappy man nothing but what we have recorded is positively known. A tall, thin gentleman, corresponding in every particular to his description, was afterwards seen abroad, in company with his wife, a person resembling Mrs. Barrat. This gentleman at a foreign watering-place had a quarrel, and, afterwards, a desperate encounter, with a stout, short-statured man, in which the latter was instantly killed, and the former mortally wounded.

The stout man's name was ascertained to be Vincent Therwell. His opponent was supposed to be Adah's false guardian, Mr. Wilmer.

In the possession of unalloyed happiness we leave the Tressilians and the Chellis. There is a firm friendship between the two families, which is

deeper than that which usually subsists between relatives, because founded upon a tie stronger than that of blood. And the sun of happiness which shines upon one family shines equally upon the other. Through the portal of a mysterious marriage with an unknown bride Sir Hugh has entered upon a life of noble aims and splendid prosperity; and through many sorrows and terrors Ildes Dare has found the sweetest rest and peace in the sheltering and adoring love of her young husband.

THE END.

SCIENCE.

THE HERCULES.—The Hercules is constructed with indented sides, to enable her broadside guns to be fired either ahead or astern, nearly in a line with the vessel's keel, while by the adoption of the turntable, the invention of Captain R. Scott, the advantages gained by working guns from port to port are as nearly as possible equivalent to those of the turret principle without its admitted defects.

CEMENT FOR KNIFE HANDLES.—1. Lay a piece of alum on a stove, and when melted roll the knife shank in it, and immediately thrust it firmly into the handle. It will soon be ready for use. 2. Fine brick dust stirred into melted resin, and used hot, will fix knife and fork handles very firmly. 3. Mix equal parts of wood ashes and common salt with water enough to make a mortar. Fill the handle with this, and then drive in the shank and let it dry.

ATMOSPHERIC AIR SIEVE.—A film of india-rubber may be used as a dialytic sieve for atmospheric air, allowing very constantly 41.6 per cent. of oxygen to pass through, instead of the 21 per cent. usually present in air. The Septum keeps back one-half of the nitrogen, and allows the other half to pass through with all the oxygen. This dialyzed air rekindles wood burning without flame, and is, in fact, exactly intermediate between air and pure oxygen gas in relation to combustion.

TO MAKE THE INDIAN TENTS WATERPROOF.—A solution of sugar of lead and alum would answer. The proportion to be used is 1 lb. of sugar of lead, 1 lb. of alum; two quarts of water, boiling, to be poured on the lead and alum pounded. A weaker solution might answer. This will make any cloth waterproof; so much so that it will do to cover a coracle or boat with, and has the advantage over macintoshes that it does not stick together. Common calico painted with it makes first-rate capes for keeping oneself or baggage dry.

IRON ORE.—Iron ore is found in every part of Italy, and yields from forty-five to sixty-five per cent. of excellent iron. The mines are situated at considerable heights above sea-level, and though almost inaccessible in winter, this is the only season when they can be worked, on account of the quantity of water and badness of the air at other times of the year. There are only thirty-eight blast furnaces in the whole country. The number of establishments for making machinery is seventy, but the raw material used is almost wholly of foreign origin. At Genoa and Naples locomotives and tenders are turned out, but their actual cost is greater than those imported.

"DRYMAKING" IN HOLLAND.—A report by Mr. Thurlow, secretary to the British Legation at the Hague, gives a description of the polders, or drained lakes, of which Haarlem-meer is the most notable example. It appears that after being pumped dry the area is cut up into parallelograms, which are frequently not much larger than an acre each, and are separated by primary canals. These drain the land in wet seasons and irrigate it in time of drought, as well as forming a highway for the small boats which take the place of the English tumbler or wagon. A certain number of parallelograms are formed into a group, and pump their superfluous drainage into transverse canals, which communicate with the main outlets to the sea. In one case there are no less than four canal systems with different levels, through all of which every drop of water must pass in order to reach the ring dyke which girdles the polder. This dyke is constructed in duplicate, with an intervening space of fifteen or twenty metres, and waterworks are erected on its banks. These dry lakes do not afterwards leak to any great extent, and the rainfall is seldom excessive, being pumped out by ordinary windmills before the 1st of May. The health of the "colonists," as the population may be called, is satisfactory, and the reclamation answers financially. Haarlem-meer took thirteen years, being completed in 1852, and cost nearly a million sterling, but the outlay has been recouped by the sale of 42,000 acres. The recovery of the Zuyder Zee is seriously looked forward to, and this would throw all former undertakings into the shade. Amsterdam would then have an outlet to the German Ocean by the North Holland Canal, now in process of construction, and which is of such dimensions as to allow of two men-of-war to pass each other at any point. During the last 200 years 300,000,000 have been expended for hydrographical purposes in the narrow tract of country, hardly as big as Wales and Yorkshire put together, lying between the Dollardt and the Scheldt; and Mr. Thurlow compares the Netherlands to a copyhold property, with Neptune as lord of the manor, whose fines amount to a million sterling per annum for repairs and superintendence.

PATENT LEATHER VARNISH.—This is carefully prepared drying oil. The skins being stretched on a board, and every trace of grease being removed from them by means of a mixture of fuller's earth and water, they are ready to receive the varnish which is then spread upon them, very thinly, by means of a species of scraper. The first coat of varnish consists of pale Prussian blue (that containing some alumina), 5 oz. drying oil, one gall boiled to the consistency of single size, and when cold ground with a little vegetable-black; it is stove-d, and afterwards polished with fine-grained pumice. The second coating resembles the first excepting in having a little pure Prussian blue mixed with it. The third coat of varnish consists of a similar mixture, but the oil is boiled until it strings well, and a little more pure Prussian blue and vegetable black is added. The last coat of varnish or finish is the same as the third, but must contain $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of pure dark-coloured Prussian blue, and $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of pure vegetable black per gallon, to which a little oil, copal or amber varnish is often added, each coat being duly stove-d and pumiced before the next is applied. The heat of the stove or oven is commonly 120 deg. Fahr. for enamelled skins, as those of the calf and seal intended for uppers, and 155 deg. to 180 deg. for stout Japan leather. The exposure in the stove is commonly for six to ten hours. The skins are next oiled and grained. The graining of the enamelled skins is done by holding the skin in one hand, and with a curved board, lined with cork (graining stick), lightly pressed upon the fleshy side, working it up and down until proper effect is produced.

THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE GLOBE.—Dr. Sterry Hunt has laid before the association at Buffalo the conclusions to which he has been led by theory and experiment concerning the primeval atmosphere of our globe. Assuming an igneous origin, as the cooling went on, the chlorine, carbon, sulphur, all the hydrogen, and an excess of oxygen would form the atmosphere. The first precipitate from this dense atmosphere must have been an intensely acid liquid, which attacking the silicates, then abounding on the surface of the globe, separated large quantities of silica, became saturated with earths and alkalis and formed the primeval sea. Salts of lime and magnesia would abound in that early ocean; and this is confirmed by the saline waters from the Palaeozoic rocks, which represent fossil sea-water of that ancient period. Afterwards great quantities of carbonate of soda were formed, which, decomposing the lime and magnesia salts of the sea, gave rise to the first limestones, and to the chloride of sodium. Hence the clays, the limestones, and the sea salt were the joint results of a process which was slowly removing from the earth its carbonic acid, and fitting it for the support of higher forms of life. The effect of a dense atmosphere of carbonic acid on chemical processes, as well as on animal and vegetable life, must have been very remarkable, and should not be lost sight of by those who investigate the subject. By throwing carbonic acid into the atmosphere of a chemical experiment, Dr. Hunt has shown that gypsum can be deposited in a pure state, thus reproducing on a small scale the great operations of nature carried on in the early ages of our earth's history.

THE CAPTIVES IN ABYSSINIA.—Colonel Meredith reports that news had been received from the captives in Abyssinia up to the 12th June, when they were all well, though still in chains. King Theodore was on his last legs, and had been out of the camp for some time. He had just returned from a plundering expedition, and had taken some thousands of cattle and many half-starved wretches of all sorts. Hearing a noise outside his tent, he inquired what it was, and was told that a prophet was comforting the sufferers, and telling them the King would shortly be killed, and they would then recover their property. Theodore replied, "My death is in God's hands, but I will prove him a false prophet," and instantly caused every one of the captured animals to be strangled. Two copies of the British ultimatum have been intercepted by the rebels, but the third is supposed to have reached the Emperor.



[ROSA'S FIRST INTERVIEW WITH MR. HASTINGS.]

SWEET ROSES YANGLED.

CHAPTER LIII.

At this crisis Rosa Gordon went with Mr. Matson to his charming house in the vicinity of the town. She was presented to his family, and won from them golden opinions by her beauty and brightness.

She made every effort to please, and Mrs. Matson, a cheerful, motherly woman, declared her to be one of the most charming young girls she had ever met.

Rosa was soon on the best terms with the young people in the house, and no one who had seen her there at the close of the first day would have imagined that she was but a waif recently cast among them.

A messenger was dispatched to Silvermere announcing her arrival, and on the next morning Mr. Matson informed her that Mr. Hastings would come himself to conduct her to his house.

In the evening some guests came in, and after discussing other topics one of the ladies asked:

"Have you heard of the grand wedding that is about to take place, Mr. Matson? The great heiress is to be married, and I am told that a trousseau fit for a princess has been ordered for her."

Mr. Matson good-humouredly said:

"There must be a mistake in one respect, Mrs. Glenn, for Mr. Hastings's daughter is supposed to be the richest girl, and I am sure she is not the bride elect."

"What makes you so sure, pray? Opal Hastings is the very person I am speaking about; she is to be married to young Mr. Fenton in a few weeks."

He uttered an exclamation of surprise, and, turning towards Rosa, asked:

"Do you hear that, Miss Gordon? 'Othello's occupation's gone,' so far as your intended pupil is concerned, for she is on the eve of marriage. Shabby treatment it is to you, I must say; but I suppose so liberal a man as Mr. Hastings will make it all right in some way."

Rosa had heard every word spoken by Mrs. Glenn, though she was apparently attending to what young Mr. Matson was saying to her, and the spasm of rage and surprise that convulsed her heart almost overcame her self-control.

But by the time her host addressed her she had regained the command of her emotions, and she turned her face towards him with an inquiring look and asked:

"What is that about Othello's occupation, sir?"

I was listening to your son, and missed what was said."

"I told you a bad piece of news, Miss Rosa. Your intended pupil has abjured the restraints of the school-room to put on the heavier yoke of matrimony. She is about to be married."

"Married! Miss Hastings married! I thought she was little more than a child," said Mrs. Matson. "I thought her father had more judgment than to allow his beautiful daughter to marry at so early an age. Opal has seen nothing of society; she has enjoyed few of the pleasures of girlhood, and here they are settling her in life. With her fortune, she should have been allowed a few years of freedom at least."

"She would never have been a belle, Mrs. Matson, if that be what you mean by the pleasures of youth; for it has been understood from her childhood that she was to marry Mr. Godfrey Fenton. I met him in the street yesterday, and I must say that he is the most elegant and distinguished-looking young man that I have ever seen. Of course Opal is head over heels in love with him, for such a suitor must be irresistible to so young a girl."

"Do you really think so, Mrs. Glenn?" asked Rosa, with a curl of her ruby lip. "I knew Mr. Fenton when I was but little older than Miss Hastings, and I did not find him so irresistible, though he flattered me by such devotion as he is in the habit of offering to every attractive girl he meets."

Mrs. Glenn looked at her in great surprise, and replied:

"I heard that he was a great flirt; that there was some sort of entanglement that caused his mother to hurry on the match; but pray excuse me, Miss Gordon, I may be touching on dangerous ground."

Rosa laughed with silvery sweetness.

"Not at all, Mrs. Glenn. Do not fancy that I was the heroine of that romance. I know the young lady you refer to, and her beauty was of the oriental type which men of Mr. Fenton's temperament prefer. I was desperately enamoured of her, and I own that I am surprised at the precipitation with which his marriage has been hurried on; but as Miss Lopez lost her fortune I suppose he thought it best to return to the old love."

Mrs. Glenn was a gossip, and loved news dearly, so she made an effort to draw from Rosa all the details of Mr. Fenton's inconstancy, but she would tell nothing more.

"I shall have to set my cap at Johnny and become your daughter, after all, Mr. Matson, even if he is younger than I am."

"He is more than half in love with you now, Miss Rosa, and I only wish that he was something more

than a hobbledehoy, that he might stand some chance with you. But we will not take trouble by the forelock, for Mr. Hastings will be sure to make some suitable arrangement for you, even if he cannot employ you as his daughter's governess."

"That would not suit me at all," she abruptly replied. "I came hither to reside in the family of Mr. Hastings, and I shall not permit myself to be transferred to any other. If he declines to receive me, I shall return whence I came."

"That will be nonsense, child. You can get as high a salary as Mr. Hastings offered you in some other wealthy family, and I intend to do my best to secure a situation for you."

"I entreat—I insist that you shall do nothing of the kind. I assure you that if I do not go to Silvermere, I shall return as soon as possible, and resume my position as music-mistress in Newhaven. It is useless to discuss this subject farther now; Mr. Hastings will come to-morrow and explain the position of affairs; I shall then be able to judge what it will be expedient for me to do. If you will excuse me, I will retire now, for my head aches, and I feel very tired."

When Rosa was alone in her own room, and the door fastened behind the girl who had assisted her to undress, she gave vent to the passion of rage and disappointment swelling in her breast. She clenched her hands, threw them above her head, and uttered such anathemas as would have made Godfrey Fenton shudder if he had heard them.

To swoop down upon him as a dire Nemesis was her first thought, and at all hazards to break off this precipitate marriage; but she gradually became calmer, and concluded to defer deciding on any plan of action until she had seen and talked with Mr. Hastings.

Rosa finally threw herself in bed, and after many hours of restless tossing to and fro she sank into a sound and refreshing sleep which lasted till a late hour of the morning.

While she was making her toilet a note from Mr. Hastings was brought up to her, briefly informing her that he would call for her at eleven o'clock, and hoped to find her in readiness to accompany him to Silvermere.

So she was to go at all events to that bourne of all her wishes, and, once there, her craft would fail her indeed if she did not find means to accomplish the vengeance she had sworn against the betrothed husband of Opal Hastings. Mr. Fenton should return to his allegiance to herself, or drink to the dregs the bitter cup her hands should prepare for him. Such was her unalterable resolve.

Rosa descended to the morning meal in good spirits and showed the note she had received. Mrs. Matson said:

"Mr. Hastings is too much of a gentleman not to do what is fair and liberal by you, Miss Gordon."

Rosa coloured slightly as she replied:

"If you mean that he will offer me money as a compensation for my disappointment, I shall not accept it for services that have never been performed. Let us talk of something else if you please, Mrs. Matson, for I am tired of thinking on this subject."

Johnny hastened to say:

"I only wish I were a few years older, Miss Rosa, and then nobody should take you from us. It seems to me that you belong to us already."

"Bravo, my son," cried his father; "that is a gallant speech for a boy of seventeen to make to a young lady."

"But I mean it, father," replied Johnny, growing red in the face, "for Miss Rosa is the nicest girl I ever have seen in my life, and I only wish I were old enough to make love to her in earnest."

Rosa smiled and nodded at him across the table.

"Thank you, my young cavalier, I shall not forget your devotion."

Johnny blushed more deeply than before; his sisters broke in with their gay talk, and breakfast proceeded with the usual cheerfulness of the meals in the Matson family. Rosa was as charming as on the previous day, and the early morning hours passed away till eleven o'clock arrived.

A few moments later a carriage drew up in front of the house, from which descended a stately, gray-haired man, who appeared more agitated than a meeting with the new governess seemed to warrant.

Mr. Hastings was actually trembling with emotion, and while a servant went to inform Miss Gordon of his arrival he stood leaning against the frame of an open window, trying to regain his composure before she appeared.

Suddenly a sweet voice that sent an electric shock through every nerve of his frame spoke near him:

"I have the pleasure of seeing Mr. Hastings, I believe."

Every shade of colour retreated from his face, and slowly turning towards her he held out his hand with a vain effort to appear composed. His voice sounded strange to himself as he said:

"Yes, I am Mr. Hastings, and I have come to take you to Silvermere. I have something also to explain to you, but that can best be done when we are in the carriage, and on our way there."

"I believe that I already know what you have to tell me, sir. I have been told since I came hither of the approaching marriage of your daughter, and of course, I suppose, you will have no desire for me to remain in your family under such changed circumstances."

"My daughter is soon to be married, but that does not materially alter my intentions towards you, Miss Gordon. I have a proposal to make to you that I think you will accede to; but there is time enough for that when I have you all to myself. Here comes Mrs. Matson now, and while I speak with her pray make yourself ready to accompany me. I have an engagement at two, and we have a long drive before us."

Mrs. Matson came in smiling and friendly, and while Rosa went to her room to prepare for her departure Mr. Hastings briefly explained to the elder lady what were his intentions with regard to her. She was pleased and satisfied, declaring that he always managed things for the best, and she was sure that Miss Gordon would be perfectly contented with the arrangement he contemplated.

Rosa came downstairs a few moments later, received the adieux of the hospitable family, and, promising to visit them when she came that way, entered the carriage with her new protector, and was driven rapidly away.

A small open wagon, containing her trunks, followed them more slowly; and her heart bounded with triumph as she felt that she was on her way to the theatre of action she had so ardently desired to gain.

Her companion sat perfectly silent till they were more than a mile from the town, but Rosa was conscious that he was attentively observing her. At first his eyes wandered furtively to her face, but soon they fixed themselves upon her with an expression that was almost one of pain. When she had borne this scrutiny as long as she felt it to be endurable she spoke herself:

"I probably remind you of someone you have known, Mr. Hastings. You look at me with a half-puzzled air as if trying to recall the features of someone you have known. I believe that I am thought to resemble your daughter."

He started at the sound of her voice and hurriedly said:

"Excuse me; I was dreaming of the past. You do remind me of Opal, and also of somebody else I know in my youth; yet you can be no relation of the person I refer to. We are fairly on the road now, and I can develop my plans for you without interruption. I trust that you will offer no objection to them."

"I will hear them first, if you please."

"Of course; that is necessary, as I do not wish you to pledge yourself to anything in the dark. You have heard of my daughter's approaching marriage, and of course the governess scheme is at an end. But I have another quite as good, to which Mrs. Hastings has eagerly consented. Opal goes to France immediately after her marriage, and it is my desire, and that of my wife, that you shall remain at Silvermere as Mrs. Hastings's companion, receiving from me the same salary as was offered to you as governess to my daughter. I think this will suit you quite as well, and you may feel assured that you will receive the attention and consideration of a daughter in the house."

"I have no doubt that every kindness will be extended to me by your family, Mr. Hastings," replied Rosa, with a singular smile; "but of course a nameless dependant like myself could not expect from others the homage and consideration due to your daughter."

"Why not? And why do you call yourself nameless? Gordon is a very good name, and one that is borne by people of aristocratic pretensions."

"True; but I have sometimes doubted my own right to bear it. I know nothing of myself. I am a waif, cast off by those connected with me, and my origin is shrouded in mystery. Who I am, or whence I came, I know not. It is but right for me to tell you this when you speak of extending to me the consideration due to a daughter of your family."

Mr. Hastings was silent some moments, and then he faintly replied:

"It is a painful position, but not irremediable. Allow me to become the guardian of your future, and I pledge you my word that it shall be a bright and a happy one. You may think this interest in you strange, Miss Gordon, and I had not intended to tell you why I wish you to become an inmate of my family; but this touching confidence has changed my purpose. The uncle who educated you was my intimate friend. I was deeply attached to him. He is dead now, and he had nothing to bequeath to you at his decease; so he left me the charge of providing for you in some way. I could do so in no other manner than that I have adopted, and I hope that I shall be able to render your new home a pleasant one to you."

Rosa listened to him with vivid interest. She eagerly said:

"You knew my uncle! Who then was he? Where did he live, and above all, why did he so perseveringly conceal from me everything concerning himself? I only know his name."

"What Mr. Fairley's reasons were I can scarcely explain. He was surrounded by difficult circumstances, and he endured many trials; but he was sincerely attached to you. I know that by the earnestness with which he implored me to take an interest in your fate, and to assist you in every way I could."

In tremulous tones Rosa exclaimed:

"Oh, Mr. Hastings, how shall I ever sufficiently thank you for this revelation! It gives me a foothold on life by assuring me that I am somebody's child; that I am really entitled to the name I bear."

There was deep compassion in his voice as he said:

"Poor child! why should you have taken this so deeply to heart, if it were so? You cannot be held responsible for the faults of others; you could not be tainted by such a stain as that, so long as you are pure and good yourself."

"The world thinks differently, sir, and I confess that I share their prejudices. What you have told me has given me new life, new confidence in the pleasant phase of existence that I am sure is opening to me. How kind of you it was to accept so annoying a trust as a giddy young girl might prove. But I promise to do my best to give you as little trouble as possible. I only hope that you will be as well satisfied with your ward as I am sure I shall be with my guardian."

With impulsive grace, Rosa raised his hand to her lips and warmly kissed it.

He hastily drew it away as he said:

"You must learn to curb your sensibility, Miss Gordon; and let me forewarn you that my wife is of that jealous temperament which would certainly lead her to misinterpret such demonstrations, however innocent they may be. Since you are to live with us, and become one of ourselves, I must prepare you

for the peculiarities of temper in Mrs. Hastings with which you will have to deal. She is generous and affectionate—so devoted, in fact, to me that you will soon understand for yourself the line of conduct it will be best for you to pursue. I wish her to like and appreciate you; but to win her to do this you must show no preference for me above herself. I hope you comprehend the ground of this unusual confidence in one I have so lately met?"

To this embarrassed speech Rosa gravely replied:

"I think I do, sir, and I will pay heed to what you have said. But pray explain to me what I shall be expected to do for Mrs. Hastings. What services will she require from her companion?"

"Oh, you will have an easy time enough. You will be called upon to read to her an hour or two every day; sometimes longer, when her novel is unusually interesting; but that will amuse you as much as it will her, I daresay. You will write her notes, make up knots of ribbon for her collars, and perhaps be trusted to alter the arrangements of the flowers in her caps. That is, if you have sufficient good taste, for Mrs. Hastings is very particular about her toilet."

"I can easily do all that," replied Rosa, smiling brightly, "and shall find pleasure in it. I am fond of reading aloud, and think that I should have made a skilful milliner. Is that all?"

"You will drive out with her, of course, and after Opal is gone must make an effort to fill her place as far as possible. I wish you to make yourself so necessary to Mrs. Hastings that she will not be willing to part from you till—till you marry. You will have an apartment of your own, and a servant to attend to you; and I need scarcely tell you that I shall do all that lies in my power to make Silvermere agreeable to you."

Rosa gratefully replied:

"I cannot sufficiently thank you for all this kindness, Mr. Hastings. It is far more than I expected, or indeed deserve."

"As to what one deserves, who gets that, I wonder? If I had my deserts, I should not be where I am, nor what I am."

There was so much bitterness in his tone that Rosa raised her eyes inquiringly to those that seemed never sated with gazing on her face. She coloured slightly as she met his earnest look, and asked:

"If you do not merit your prosperity, sir, who does? The man who acts towards a forlorn stranger as you are acting towards me must be a good one, I think, and worthy of every reward."

"Then heaven help the sinners! But we have exhausted this subject, and now tell me about yourself. Give me a sketch of your life from your earliest remembrance. I am interested in learning all that can be told of one who, in future, is to stand to me in the relation of ward."

In her most piquant manner Rosa complied with this request, and she kept literally to the truth till she came to her escape from Mrs. Lyme's, and her engagement with Mrs. Hawks to act as her companion. She was aware that in the early portion of her narrative she must not vary from facts, because she intuitively knew that enough had been already made known to Mr. Hastings to render prevarication dangerous.

When she came to the Hawks episode she put her own colouring upon the incidents she felt sure her companion had already heard from Mr. Fenton, and denounced the interference of Mrs. Langley as cruel and unjust. She ended by saying:

"To accomplish their own ends they tempted me to mimic Mrs. Hawks, as Mrs. Langley was most anxious that her fortune should descend to her niece. She hoped in that event that Mr. Fenton would marry Miss Lopez and be out of the way of her brother."

"Out of Guy Denham's way? What do you mean by that?"

"Excuse me, sir. If you do not know, in the present position of affairs I do not care to enlighten you. Mr. Fenton is on the eve of marriage with your daughter, and it is useless to talk of those things now."

"But it not useless. Opal's happiness may be at stake, and—Miss Gordon—I insist on a full explanation of what happened at Newport."

With seeming reluctance Rosa replied:

"I had rather not tell what I only partly guessed. But if you insist in this way, I suppose I must."

"I do insist. It is most important to me to know what you seem so anxious to keep back."

"Well, since you will know it, sir, I found out that Mr. Denham is in love with Miss Hastings, and by helping Mr. Fenton to marry Miss Lopez Mrs. Langley hoped to open the way for her brother to win her."

"Perhaps that was natural and pardonable; but was Godfrey so much in love with Miss Lopez as to

wish to make her his wife? or was it the prospect of the great fortune her aunt could give her that allured him?"

"As to that Mr. Fenton had best speak for himself, sir. He is a flirt, as I know from experience, for he and I had quite a sentimental acquaintance while he was at college; but with us it was 'diamond cut diamond,' I believe. He may have been no more in love with Miss Lopez than he was with me, but he seemed very much in earnest."

For many moments Mr. Hastings seemed lost in painful thought, and Rosa remained silent, wondering what the result of her revelations would be. He at length aroused himself with an effort, and slowly said:

"You will oblige me by saying nothing of this to Opal, Miss Gordon. It is too late now to act on what you have told me, and I do not wish her mind to be disturbed by doubts of her lover. Her union with Mr. Godfrey Fenton is a family arrangement of long standing, and it cannot be deferred on any pretext. I have sufficient confidence in Godfrey to believe that, in spite of his wandering fancies, he will make good and affectionate husband to my daughter. He has many good qualities, and possesses a warm and tender heart. Opal has found her place in it, I am sure; for no one could be with her and not love her dearly."

"I have no doubt that you take the right view of the case," was the brief reply; and Rosa sank back listless and disappointed.

But she remembered that she had yet time in which to act before the day of the wedding, and she took hope to her heart again, though it was wrong with many bitter and jealous pangs.

She soon brightened up, and gave him a graphic account of her voyage; describing the visit she had made Mrs. Marsden. At that name Mr. Hastings flushed, and then grew pale, even to his very lips. Rosa remembered the story told her by Mrs. Hawks, and maliciously went on:

"Mrs. Marsden looks like a broken-hearted, worn-out woman, and I should think that she has met with some woeful calamity in her day. But she is married to an ascetic, who thinks most things wrong that are done in this wicked world, and that may account for her subdued manner and faded appearance."

In a constrained tone Mr. Hastings said:

"I am sorry to hear such an account of Mrs. Marsden, for I knew her in her youth, and a brighter or more animated creature than she then was it would be difficult to find. But time changes us all sadly, and tells on some more fatally than on others. Did you see her husband?"

"No, sir—he was from home; but I saw her children—at least those that remain to her. She was in mourning for the elder ones, four of whom were snatched from her in a single week. That, doubtless, helped to bring her to what she is."

"Poor Anna, poor Anna!" he muttered.

Then, suddenly regarding Rosa with a piercing glance, he asked:

"Did you ever hear Mrs. Hawks speak of Mrs. Marsden? They were brought up together, and—and I believe they were very much attached to each other?"

"Oh dear, no, sir; why should Mrs. Hawks have told me about her?"

And the falsehood was spoken with the most natural air possible. Mr. Hastings looked pleased, and carelessly said:

"I thought Mrs. Hawks might have talked to you of her early friends, as she must have been very fond of you."

"She did speak of them sometimes, and I remember hearing her speak of you as the lover of her sister. But I suppose I must be careful to hint nothing of that to Mrs. Hastings, as she might not like to hear of your having a first love?"

"You are very right!" he gravely responded. "Although my wife was a widow when I married her, she cannot bear the thought that she was not my first choice. It would make her wretched to be told that I ever sought the hand of any other woman. I admired Susan Horton very much, but if Mrs. Hastings could know all, I do not think she would be very jealous of my preference for her. Poor Susan eloped, and was therefore disinherited by her father. It was her daughter, I suppose, who expected to inherit Mrs. Hawks's fortune?"

"Yes, sir, and she may recover it yet. A will was executed by Mr. Horton, leaving the whole estate to Miss Lopez, at Mrs. Hawks's death, but it could not be found. It may chance to come to light some day, for such things are not often irrevocably lost."

"I sincerely hope it will, for it was an act of injustice on the part of her aunt to deprive her of her family inheritance. I hope she provided for her in some way?"

"Yes; a thousand a year was given to her—little

enough for herself and her father to live on, for Mr. Lopez is paralyzed, and a dreadful charge to a young girl I should think."

"Not if she loves him as she should. But here is Silvermere, and I welcome you to your future home."

Rosa looked out on the undulating woodland and wide carriage drive; saw the white walls of the stately mansion looming in the distance, with the miniature lake lying in its green hollow; and she enthusiastically exclaimed:

"What a beautiful place it is! almost like a baronial mansion, I declare! So this is the Eden of which the fair Opal is the Eve. I congratulate you, Mr. Hastings, for few have their lot cast in so charming a Paradise."

"Fair enough," he muttered, "if there were no serpents to mar its loveliness."

Rosa caught the meaning of his words, and bitterly thought:

"If there had been none before, you have this day brought one into it, who will poison its sweets, or die in the attempt."

But she smiled serenely, and uttered burst after burst of rapturous praise as each turn in the road revealed some new beauty, till the carriage drew up at the steps.

The sound of approaching wheels brought Opal to the portico, and she was closely followed by Mr. Fenton. Rosa knew him at the first glimpse of his person, but she crushed down the rebellious jealousy that swelled in her heart; and, when he descended the steps and offered her his hand to assist her from the carriage, with the cool politeness of an ordinary acquaintance, Rosa calmly said:

"How do you do, Mr. Fenton? You scarcely expected me to follow so closely on your steps when you left Newport. But I am here as you see, and likely to remain here for some time. I hope you are glad to see me?"

"Glad is scarcely the right word, Miss Gordon. I am charmed to meet you again. Mrs. Hastings could scarcely find a more agreeable companion to replace the daughter she is about to lose."

"Thank you! I understand that you are about to become a Benedict at last—pray accept my congratulations!"

"Thanks, in my turn! but I am so happy and well satisfied by my choice that congratulations hardly signify. Of course, though, I appreciate the friendly spirit that dictates them, at its true value."

These insincere words passed between them as they ascended the steps, at the head of which stood Opal, looking paler than usual and a little excited. She dreaded the intrusion of this stranger into the family—she could not have explained why, and she remembered with pain that her betrothed had not treated Rosa Gordon quite well.

She offered her hand to the new comer with a faint smile, and said:

"There is no need of an introduction between us, Miss Gordon, for we already know each other through our mutual friends. I hope you enjoyed the drive this morning, for the day is heavenly and the country you have passed through well worth looking at."

"I found it delightful, I assure you, but I am afraid that the agreeable discourse of your father occupied my attention more than the sylvan landscape through which the road wound. I cannot tell you how deeply his kindness has impressed me—how grateful I am for it!"

While this greeting passed the two girls scanned each other, and each one saw wherein she differed from the other. Opal was attracted by Rosa's beauty, and thought herself complimented in being thought to resemble her; but Rosa's mental comment was:

"How could Godfrey Fenton compare that pale, unformed girl to a brilliant, passionate creature like myself? She has no animation—no style; and I don't believe she loves him, for she has not the air of a happy bride elect."

Mr. Hastings lingered in the yard till the greeting was over, but he now joined them, and the three entered the house together.

Mrs. Hastings received Rosa in a small boudoir opening from her bed-room. She was lying on a sofa in a handsome morning wrapper, and over the tables and chairs a quantity of elegant trifles that had arrived only that day from Paris were scattered in gay profusion. She half raised herself and languidly said:

"How do you do, Miss Gordon? I am happy to welcome to Silvermere a companion who will be capable of amusing me when my daughter is gone. Excuse the confusion of the room, but a portion of the trousseau came this morning, and I have been looking over it. Olympe has excelled herself, for the head-dresses sent for myself are the loveliest things I ever saw. As there was not time to send to Paris, I was compelled to order the things I needed from here."

Rosa took the offered hand and gracefully said:

"I thank you, Mrs. Hastings, for being willing to

accept me as a poor substitute for your daughter while she is away. I think I shall find my duties towards you less tedious than instructing even so advanced a pupil as Miss Hastings would have been. I am not naturally fond of teaching, but I shall fall into your ways, I am sure, almost without an effort."

"I hope you will; and you will not find me I think very hard to please. You read French, I am told, and it will be a great pleasure to me to listen to you when we have time for such things. But just now I can think of nothing but Opal and her bridal outfit."

"I think I can satisfy you in that also, Mrs. Hastings; for I took lessons from a Parisian, and he pronounced my accent perfect."

"We shall get along together famously, I know. But I will not detain you longer now. Minette will show you your room, and you must call on her for any services you may need. When you are rested, and we have dined, we will look over these loves of things together, and I hope that you will appreciate them more highly than my daughter does. Opal is as indifferent about what has been ordered for her as if they were designed for some other person."

Opal smiled and said:

"Why should I think about my clothes now, mamma, when I have never found it necessary to do so before? I have been like one of Solomon's Lilies, I am afraid, and it is too late now to inspire in me a passion for what has always been furnished me without any effort of my own."

"But you are going to be married, child; and you will not have me then to choose your dresses and order the style in which they should be made. You have always been well dressed, because I superintended your toilet; but now that you are going away from me I don't know but that you may be induced to wear what may be frightfully unbecoming."

"The milliners and mantua-makers must arrange all that, mamma," replied Opal, with a light laugh. "Besides, Godfrey has excellent taste, and I can consult him."

At this familiar mention of Mr. Fenton's name Rosa felt as if she could have struck her to the heart. By a sudden motion of her head she caused her veil to fall over her face, and she did not put it up again. Mrs. Hastings said:

"Miss Gordon is fatigued with her long and dusty drive. You had better take her to her room at once, my dear, and see yourself that everything is in order there."

The two girls went out together, ascended the broad staircase, and passed through the upper hall. At the farthest end of this Opal opened the door of a handsome room, looking out towards the lawn.

(To be continued.)

HOW SHE WAS CURED.

"No breakfast yet?" said Major Vernon, rather dolefully, as he glanced up at the little mantel-clock whose fingers pointed inexorably to the hour of nine.

And you would scarcely have blamed Major Vernon for speaking "rather dolefully," could you have looked round at the slovenly room, with its curtains drawn askew, its furniture undusted, its ash-choked fire, and its general aspect of forlorn discomfort. Major Vernon, in common with most of his masculine kind, liked a bright hearth-stone, a cosy breakfast-room, and a cheerful face behind the coffee-urn, and the barometer of his mental organization fell several degrees as he looked round the apartment.

Major Vernon's brows contracted. He rang the bell violently.

In about five minutes it was answered by a slovenly looking girl, with sleeves rolled up, and shoes down at the heel.

"Katie, why is not breakfast ready?"

"Sure, sir, it isn't no fault of me own; Bridget got mad this mornin', and went, without so much as 'by your lave'; and it's meself never learned to cook, barrin' it's praties and meal; and Widow Flanagan's down in the kitchen to help me. I didn't know who else to send for."

And, in the self-same moment, the crash of broken china and the clang of metal cooking-implements gave wordless witness to the efficacy of "Widow Flanagan's" labours.

Major Vernon rose up hurriedly, and began to pace the room with disturbed brow and hasty movements.

"A man might as well be in Bedlam!" he muttered to himself. "Make haste with your breakfast, Katie. I'll try to send a cook from the registry-office before dinner-time."

"An' what shall I order for dinner, sir?"

"Oh, almost anything—I don't care what."

"Sure then," said Katie to herself as she disappeared, "I'll have porgies and praties, bein' it's Friday—porgies is good and healthy."

Meanwhile Major Vernon had ascended the stairs in rapid strides, two steps at a time, and knocked impetuously at a green-baize-covered door.

"Come in!" responded a faint voice.

And the major entered accordingly.

The room was darkened by layers within layers of heavy window draperies, and the footfall sank noiselessly into a moss-like carpet. So deep was the artificial twilight thus created that it was several seconds before Major Vernon could discern in which corner of the room the easy-chair was placed. A slight figure reclined therein—the figure of a woman—Major Vernon's wife.

She was pale with the pallor one might remark in a blanched sprout of celery, or a plant that has grown in the dark; and there was a general languor in her appearance, corroborated by the rows of medicine bottles on the toilet-table and the heavy odour of artificial stimulants and perfumes that filled the room.

"Well, my dear," said the major, almost unconsciously lowering his voice as he entered the room, "how do you feel this morning?"

"No better," was the reply, spoken in a tone of the utmost despondency.

"No better? Didn't that last medicine do you any good?"

"Not a particle. I didn't suppose it would, George—in fact, I knew it wouldn't."

"Nonsense!" ejaculated the major, abruptly.

"Oh, yes, you may say 'nonsense' as much as you like, George, and you may shout at the top of your lungs, and split my poor head open too if it pleases your humour! But I don't know that that will make any difference in the actual state of my feelings."

"I beg your pardon, my dear," said the major, meekly. "I wasn't aware that I was speaking so loud."

"It's of no consequence," said the wife, resignedly—"none in the world."

"I am sorry you are no better, Cynthia."

"I never expect to be any better in this world, George."

"But, my dear, Dr. Brower always insisted that this was nothing on earth but the 'hypo'; that you are not really ill, except through lack of exercise and too much of an indoor life."

"Dr. Brower is an old fogey, no more fitted to be a physician than our Tommy!"

"Don't you think, Cynthia, you might rouse yourself a little? The house is all at sixes and sevens, and the children are running wild, to say nothing of my own comfort, and—"

He checked himself, for Mrs. Vernon had buried her face in the cologne-drenched handkerchief and was sobbing.

"Oh, George, how can you speak in that way? As if one's health was in one's own hands!"

"To a certain extent, my dear, it is."

"George, I think it is my solemn duty to repeat once for all what I have so often told you without any seeming effect—I shall never be any better; nor can I reasonably hope to remain many months longer with you."

"My dear!"

"Hear me out without interruption this once. I feel it my duty to warn you that you had better proceed at once with all preparations—that your affairs had best be arranged in reference to—to my death. I have no objections to these melancholy arrangements; in fact, it would be rather a relief to know that they were completed!"

"But, Cynthia—"

"Major Vernon, may I beg two minutes' farther indulgence? What I was intending to remark will soon be said. Of course I cannot but suppose that my place will soon be filled; nor do I object, for I am fully aware that you have long ceased to regard me as aught but a wretched, sickly incumbrance, and—"

"Cynthia!" sternly interrupted her husband, "be silent! Have I ever given you any reason to speak in that manner of me?"

Mrs. Vernon broke into hysterical sobs, and her husband quitted the room with bent brows and set teeth.

"By Jove!" he muttered, "this is too much for any mortal man to stand. I'll go and talk to Dr. Brower about it."

And go he did. The old physician listened sagely, shook his head, and played with the bunch of gold seals that depended from his watch chain.

"My dear Vernon, your wife is no more ill than I am."

"But she fully believes herself to be so."

"Yes, and that's just what causes the mischief with such women. If we only could rouse her."

"Yes—if!"

"Don't despair, my boy; perhaps it may yet be done," said the old man, cheerfully. "It is hard to

see your domestic happiness turned upside down all through silly, groundless whim. Now let's talk the matter over; perhaps between our united wits we may hit on a plan that's worth something."

An hour afterwards Major Vernon came whistling out of the doctor's office with a face brighter than he had worn for many a day.

"My dear," he said, entering his wife's room that evening, "I have thought over what you told me this morning, and decided to act according to your wishes."

"Have you?"

"Because, of course, there's no use in trying to evade an inevitable event. I'm very sorry, and all that sort of thing; but if it really must be, why there's nothing for it but to submit. So, my dear, I've written to invite your cousin, Madeline Smythe, here, just to give an eye to things."

"Madeline Smythe," repeated Mrs. Vernon, scornfully. "A girl like that! What can she know about housekeeping? You had a great deal better send for old Aunt Mabitabel Jones. But of course it's quite indifferent to me."

"Oh, of course!" said the major, rubbing his hands. "I didn't suppose you would care to be consulted, after what you said last week about wanting to exclude all worldly cares and responsibilities from your mind."

Madeline Smythe arrived and was shown into her cousin's room—a dimpled, bright-eyed little damsel, with cheeks as fresh as an oleander blossom, and teeth like rows of translucent pearls. Mrs. Vernon extended to her a rather cool greeting, and expressed her opinion that "that child never could keep house."

"But it's George's business and not mine," said Mrs. Vernon, with more acrimony than exactly befitted a lady who stood so near the verge of mortal existence.

"Mem!" demanded the new cook, "will ye please to giv' me the money for the bar'l o' flour? The man's here waitin'."

"Go to your master."

"If you please, mem, he's out—gone to the Park with Miss Maddie."

Mrs. Vernon frowned and gave Norah her purse.

"Tommy," she said, the next day, as the little child crept into the room to ask for "a penny to give the organ-man with the dancing monkey," "where is your papa?"

"He's in the parlour, mamma, reading poetry to Cousin Maddie. Mamma, could I have two mothers?"

"Why?"

"Because Katie asked me last night how I would like Cousin Maddie for a mother!"

"That is all nonsense!" said Mrs. Vernon, sharply. "Little boys should not talk about what they cannot understand."

But, nevertheless, Tommy's artless question made her very uncomfortable during the rest of the afternoon.

"My dear," said the major, entering the room next morning, dressed in faultless linen and shining broadcloth, "can we do anything for you this morning?"

"We?"

"Yes. Maddie and I are going out to buy new table linen and napkins, and to see about chintz covers for the parlour furniture."

Mrs. Vernon hesitated.

"Do we really need these things, George?"

"We have long needed them, my dear. You see it is so long since you have been in either dining-room or parlour that—"

"Yes, I know. But is Miss Smythe a competent judge of household linen?"

"An excellent judge, my dear—excellent. You've really no idea what a clever girl Maddie is."

Mrs. Vernon crimsoned. She was getting disgusted with Maddie's name so frequently repeated.

At noon, when Major Vernon and Miss Smythe returned, what was their astonishment at finding Mrs. Vernon herself in the parlour, dressed, not as an invalid, but in a very becoming pink lawn wrapper, with her curls brushed out in long bright coils, and a pink bow at her throat.

"I'll see if I can't look as well as that little minx, Maddie Smythe," Mrs. Vernon had said energetically to herself as she dressed.

"Why, my dear!" ejaculated the major as he entered, "this is—indeed—a surprise. So you are better?"

"Yes, very much better," said Mrs. Vernon, eyeing the parcel in Madeline Smythe's hand. "Have you been buying that stuff for furniture covers?"

"Yes—isn't it pretty?"

"Pretty! I never saw such a hideous pattern in my life."

"Why, Maddie and I thought it very tasteful," said the major.

"At all events I won't have it in my house," declared Mrs. Vernon. "I'll take it back myself and exchange it to-morrow."

"You, my dear?"

"Yes, my dear."

"But you are unable to stir out of the house."

"You'll see whether I am able or not," said Mrs. Vernon. "Thank fortune, I am not yet upon my death-bed, whatever some people may hope."

And she did go to exchange the despised furniture chintz, and returned with cheeks tinted like a rose, and brighter eyes than she had had for many a day.

As she entered the dining-room her husband sat by the window, with Maddie Smith in an easy-chair close beside him, both apparently absorbed in conversation. Maddie coloured scarlet as Mrs. Vernon's sharp glance encountered hers, and making some excuses she left the room.

"I am sorry to have interrupted your tête-à-tête, Major Vernon," said the indignant wife, drawing herself up.

"No interruption at all, my dear," said the major, nonchalantly.

"But perhaps you may as well know now as at any time that my health is so much improved that henceforward I shall need no deputy to preside over my household."

"I am very glad to hear it, my love."

"Perhaps, however, your friend Miss Smythe may not share your gratification."

"Well, I presume she will, as she was just confiding to me the fact that she was to be married one month from to-day."

"Married! Maddie Smythe? And to whom?"

"To Mr. Calverley."

Mrs. Vernon's face grew radiant. "I must go and congratulate her."

And Maddie was surprised at the affectionate warmth with which her heretofore frigid cousin whispered pleasant words of congratulations.

"George," she said as she returned to the dining-room, "do you know what I feared?"

"What?"

"That my folly had—had estranged your heart from me, and that you were acting on my own absurd suggestion of preparing for my death by filling my place!"

What Major Vernon said we could hardly place properly upon paper—but his arguments must have been conclusive, for Mrs. Vernon's face was radiant as she sat behind the steaming tea-urn scarce two hours later.

And when Dr. Brower dropped in in a social sort of way to inquire about the success of his little stratagem, Mrs. Vernon's smile was the first to greet him.

"Ah!" thought the little old doctor, "my prescription has worked wonders!"

It had indeed; for the demon of hypochondria had been exorcised for good, and all through its potent influence!

A. R.

A CHEQUE FOR TEA.—A curious fashion of advertising has appeared. It is a cheque for 2s. 6d., in true banker's-cheque fashion, drawn for a pound of best tea on an eminent tea-selling firm, signed by a prince. Should it not bear a penny stamp? How is it a five-pound Bank of England note escapes?

A REBUKE.—Dr. Arnold once lost all patience with a dull scholar, when the pupil looked up into his face and said, "Why do you speak so angrily, sir? Indeed, I am doing the best I can." Years after, the doctor used to tell the story to his children, and say, "I never felt so ashamed in my life. That look and that speech I have never forgotten."

THE FRENCH POST-OFFICE NEWSPAPER.—The French post-office newspaper—for they have a paper for the interests of the *employés*—informs us that out of 500 letters distributed each day at the *poste restante* office, 400 are love-letters, 50 about business, 30 are replies to advertisements, 15 containing lies and calumnies, 2 about politics, 2 about benevolent acts, 1 about friendship. A very clever average no doubt, but how many thousand did the post open to enable it to make it?

GROUSE DISEASE.—A farmer, who takes and relishes the shooting on his own farm, attributes the cause of the fatal malady among grouse to a great extent to the want of young heather. During the last three springs heather-burning to a wide extent could not be accomplished for snow lying here and there on the moors till the burning season was over. He disapproves of the system now quite common of burning heather in strips, because the heath when so confined never burns properly. A good thorough muir burn, he adds, changes the character of the ground, and leaves such a deposit of ashes behind it as makes a first-rate top-dressing, while burning strips leaves no ashes.

THE PRIDE OF THE FAMILY.

CHAPTER IX.

So it happened that, early the next morning, Urban's card was sent up to ask for an interview with Miss Merton.

He had taken care to be sure that Edith and her mother were away on a visit, and Mr. Walter Sattonstall at the warehouse.

Miss Merton came down in a becoming morning dress, whose rose-tinted hue heightened the beauty of her clear complexion, shining raven braids, and soft black eyes.

The moment she looked upon his face she turned pale, and involuntarily retreated.

But Urban sprang forward, caught her hand, and with that ready intuition of his cried out:

"Nay, nay, dear Miss Merton, at least give me one pitying word. I see that you have read my errand. Do not crush me by a refusal."

Miss Merton silently withdrew her hand, and took a seat by the table, shading her face with her hand.

"May I speak?" asked Urban, with a timid, appealing glance, extremely becoming to his handsome face.

"I should be very ungracious to refuse you that privilege, Mr. Worth."

Urban glanced at the fair, serious face. He knew a finely worded, eloquently spoken appeal would be worse than wasted upon such a woman. He had the tact to perceive that the very lack of attempt to influence her would be the strongest plea in his favour. So he threw into his fine blue eyes a soul-appealing look, stretched out his hand with an imploring gesture, and only said:

"What necessity for me to speak? Oh, Miss Merton, I am neither wealthy, talented, nor in any way deserving of you, but I love you. You will make me miserable for life if you refuse me."

Anna Merton sighed wearily, and removed her hand from her forehead, to press it against her heart.

"I am sorry you have said this," said she, slowly; "if I give you any definite answer, it must be no."

"Then give me no definite answer, and let me win the yes," cried Urban, eagerly. "But I do not understand—"

"Nor I, that is my trouble," said she, with a faint smile.

"You mean concerning my prospects, my character. I tell you frankly I am not wealthy, as people believe," continued Urban. "I spend a great deal. I know—I had no motive to save, and am fond of refinement and luxury. But if I continue to earn the same, what difference will it make?"

Her fine eyes kindled.

"You earn it all yourself, do you? I am so glad of that. I like it better than if you had told me of boundless expectations from other sources."

Urban caught at this straw in his favour, and answered with all the fervour of truth, without a single faltering glance or scruple of conscience:

"Certainly I do, and I can do more if I have a worthy incentive. What is a man made for if not for usefulness? Did you think me all the while a useless dawdler, a hanger-on to paternal bounty?" A smile of approbation curved sweetly her scarlet lips, her eyes followed his proud gesture with an admiring glance. "If you could only love me, will only help me to be worthy of you," he said, assuming an attitude worthy a young Apollo.

"There lies the uncertainty," replied Miss Merton, in a dreamy tone. "I like you very much, certainly. No other gentleman pleases me so well—and yet—and yet, I am not sure it is love."

"I will be content with whatever it may be," cried Urban, exultingly; "do not hesitate for that. Your friendship is better than the love of any other. I ask no more."

"But," said Miss Merton, arching her swanlike neck, "though you may be content with so poor a substitute I should not. My husband must be my king."

She blushed while she said it.

Urban bit his lip and was silent, pondering in which way to act with so strange a character.

"Miss Merton, at least you will not deny me hope," he ventured to say, presently.

"I cannot tell. Be patient another three months, and then perhaps the way will be clear to me."

"Never 'no'!" answered Urban, touching his lips gallantly to the fair hand. "Let me enjoy even delusive hope a little longer."

But he went away angry and impatient, trying to persuade himself that he was an ill-used individual. Miss Merton sat where he had left her, her face full of weariness and pain.

"It is such a temptation," she murmured. "I am so tired of my lonely life, so longing for a close heart-friend. So weary of my uncle's querulous, selfish whims, of my aunt's frivolous, heartless ways.

It is such a temptation to have a friend, strong to help, to take away from me my anxieties and cares. Somebody to look after me, to care for me, to love me best of all. Oh, it would comfort me so! Why can I not be satisfied with simply liking him, for I know I find him very agreeable. I am always happier in his presence; I can unhesitatingly single him out from all the rest as the most welcome. But no, I will not cheat myself. Shall I sell a royal birthright for a mess of pottage? I will wait until the three months are gone. Who knows what they may bring me? I confess I had other wild thoughts—how preposterous they were!"

She sighed again, and then the colour came over her cheeks.

"He was so rude to me, it was inexcusable, and he has never offered me an apology. It is right for me to be very angry with Mr. Tristain. I wonder what that little bye-play between them meant the other night? I am convinced that Urban Worth and Mr. Tristain have met before. I am surprised no one else notices the likeness between them. They are certainly very different in manner. But how noble he was that terrible day. So strong, so masterly, so heroic! I wonder what he could mean when he said there was a reason for him to avoid me?"

And so Miss Merton, who came down to meet and receive Urban Worth's proposal, went back to her chamber musing about his brother.

Tristain, meanwhile, met his brother, just as he emerged from the Sattonstall mansion. Mr. Walter had left the key of his safe in his library drawer, and, not caring to send the boy during his wife's absence, he asked Tristain to go for it.

At the foot of the massive stone steps the brothers met face to face. Tristain was pale and stern.

"Well?" said he, drawing a quick breath.

"It is all right," exclaimed Urban, by no means willing to betray his temporary discomfiture. "Only wait three months, and I'll ask openly for your congratulations."

Deadly pale, utterly miserable, and angry at his own weakness, Tristain staggered rather than walked into the library when the servant admitted him, and dropped into a chair. The servant glanced at him apprehensively, and in the absence of his mistress and her daughter, hurried to Miss Merton.

"Mr. Tristain is in the library, miss. Indeed, he looks very ill, white as a ghost. I'm afraid something is the matter."

Miss Merton hesitated only a moment, then filled a glass of wine, and walked quietly towards the library.

The open door showed her the pale, pain-racked face, and, forgetting her former resentment, she hurried to his side.

"You are ill, Mr. Tristain. What can I do for you?"

"Nothing, nothing in the world," answered poor Tristain, trying vainly to steady his voice.

"At least take this glass of wine," she said; "you are so pale, you frighten me."

"Don't let me do that; don't let me mar your happiness by a single feeling of pity for my misery."

"You are unhappy," she said, softly, in tones of angelic compassion. "If I could only help you!"

"But you can't; no one can help me. I am doomed to disappointments," he answered, bitterly.

"I can't imagine—if it is any business affair, I am sure I can help you," she began, in perplexity. "If you need money—"

"Money!"—he ejaculated the word with intense sarcasm—"money! poor dross. If you filled the room with it for me it would not lessen a moment's pain."

And again he dropped his head, and a tear slipped over his cheeks.

She stood looking at him, terribly shocked by this intensity of grief in so stern and iron a nature, not daring to urge any farther relief.

"Indeed, I am very sorry for you," said she, presently.

He dashed the tears away and smiled proudly.

"What a simpleton I must seem to you, and yet I am not ashamed of it. Why should not a true man weep who learns that the best blessing of his life is lost to him? that his brightest light is quenched, his dearest hope wrenched away? Why should I be ashamed to weep when I have lost all this? But let it pass, the weakness is over. I shall conquer it, and learn to bear this heaviest cross of all, as I have born the others."

"You have lost—" began she.

"Something perhaps as far above me as the stars, but I clung to the mad hope of being worthy the attachment some time. Now the hope even is wrenched away from me."

"I am very sorry."

"Heaven bless you! May my misery be your truest happiness. I dare not speak more."

More and more bewildered, Miss Merton said, a little impatiently:

"I do not understand you at all. I see that you are suffering from some great blow. But how your trouble can make me happy is a mystery. And in the name of our old friendship, for the sake of the grateful respect I owe you for the life you saved, I indignantly refute the assertion."

Tristain was slowly coming to his senses.

"I am ashamed of myself to be troubling you with my wild ravings. Forget them, I beseech you; I came for Mr. Sattonstall's key. It is in this drawer. Thank you, I will take the wine."

She smiled upon him rather gravely.

"Now I wish you would be good enough to tell me your trouble. I am sure I can help you a little."

Tristain coloured, and then paled again.

"What is it?" demanded she, observing his hesitation; "what have you lost, Mr. Tristain?"

Tristain had a strong will, but his power of endurance had been terribly tried. He rallied a little, but the wistful, pleading glance of the dark eyes conquered him.

"Oh, Miss Merton, do not kill me for my audacity; it is because I worship you so wildly, because I have lost you, that the sunshine has gone out of the sky for eyes of mine. I have told you what I ought not to tell. Let me go now."

He snatched up the key, rushed out of the room, and in a moment more she heard the outer door close after him.

Miss Merton sat down in the chair and covered her face with her hands. The proud, imperious, self-controlled Anna Merton was sobbing violently.

"I know now, oh, I know now!" she cried, "my hero, my lord, my king!"

That day she went home to the great mansion by the iron-works, and weeks rolled away before either Urban or Tristain looked again upon her face.

Something like a month after Urban's return from his visit to his father's house Joe made his appearance, startling Tristain by presenting himself before he had breakfasted one drizzling morning.

"Why, Joe, old fellow, how are you? Walk in, walk in. I declare I should hardly have known you."

"Yes, Tris, it's me. And you've still the same old honest face. I'm sure I can trust you. Town life can't spoil you, Tris, I knew it couldn't," said Joe, with a slow gravity and utter absence of smiles, which struck his cousin with painful apprehensions.

"But, Joe, you don't look well yourself. You're thin, and all that ruddy bloom has gone. I'm afraid you're working too hard, Joe."

"Pooh, I'm well enough. Work is the best thing in the world for me. I live by it better than I do eating."

"Now, Joe, what in the world is the matter? That speech isn't at all like you. Why didn't you come after that situation? Urban said you'd write, but I never received the letter."

"I don't want any of his situations, nor any of his help," said Joe, gruffly.

"Whose situations?" repeated the puzzled Tristain.

"Urban Worth's."

"What's the matter, Joe?" demanded Tristain, taking the red, rough hand tenderly in his.

"Don't, don't, Tris. You'll break me down, and I must keep up. I want you to go with me and see Urban."

"You'd better let me send for him to come here. He's a fine gentleman, and I never venture myself into his fashionable quarters. But if it's about the situation, I can attend to that. In fact, it was my doing, keeping it open for you."

"So he was false about that, too. He made us think it all came from him. If it's you I'm to be under obligation to, perhaps I'll think of it. I may be glad to get away from the Corner."

"You'll do a great deal better with less hard work. He's a generous man to work for. You and little Rose could live so happily and cosily."

"Stop, Tris, oh, stop!" exclaimed Joe, his great, brawny frame all of a tremble. "That's all over."

"Oh, Joe, I'm sorry."

"And it's his doing!" cried Joe, clenching his fist.

"Do you mean Urban?"

"Yes, that serpent, that evil spirit! His four weeks of pleasuring has made mischief enough in our town! With his fine broadcloth, his scented curls, his rings and furbelows, and town graces. Curse him! Curse him!"

"Joe, Joe!" broke in Tristain.

"Be still, Tris, you don't know. If you did you'd hate him as much as I do. We were so happy, Rose and I, till he came. And then her head was turned;

I was away, and nobody thought to look out for him. He went everywhere with her, flattered her up with fine promises, and great stories of fashionable life. He shall keep his word, I swear to you, he shall keep his word, the cowardly reprobate."

"Hush, Joe; you remember she always liked him when we were children. Many's the heartache I had, when a boy, to see how Urban could win her favour away from me."

"Is that any reason why he should prove a villain? He knew she was my betrothed, that she was to be my wife as soon as I was able to make a home for her. And that would have been long ago if it hadn't been for the help father's given to keep him in his idle ways."

Tristain groaned.

"It ain't your fault, Tris. I ain't blaming you. I swear to you it was the truth you uttered when you told Theron Spriggs he had chosen wrong, and I expect your father begins to find it out. He's broken down terribly this last year, he works like a slave, and the farm is all mortgaged up. And who's done it but this model lawyer, who was to make all our fortunes?"

Tristain's groan was deeper than before.

"You've told me the worst, I hope," he said.

"No, I haven't, Tris Worth. I didn't mean to let it out, but you're just the same old honest Tris, and I must relieve my mind a little. I tell you I've been half crazy. Rose has been strange ever since, Tris, and wouldn't talk to me, nor go anywhere, seeming agitated like and watching all the time, as if somebody was coming after her. All her pretty colour has gone, and she's as pale as a lily, and her eyes that were so beautiful and bright are always dull now or red with crying. I found out pretty quick that there was trouble in my love-making. But it's only a week ago she told me fair and square that it was all over between us. That he had promised to marry her, and that she loved him. I was like a mad creature. Oh, Tris, I did love her so, and I was so proud of her. I don't know all I said, but I told her he would never marry her, that he was a villain, and she became pale and scared-looking, and still I had no pity. And then, Tris, she slipped right down at my feet, and lay there like one dead. Oh, my pretty, pretty Rose! If we had only both died then how much better it would have been. I was half frightened out of my wits, but I brought her to at last. And then she fell down at my feet, crying and sobbing."

"Oh, Joe, Joe," says she, 'pity me, make him marry me, or it will kill poor mother, and I shall be ruined for ever. He promised to marry me, indeed he did. Oh, Joe, be my friend, and help me, or I shall die!'

"She wouldn't get up, but lay there, clinging to my feet. Tris, Tris, you don't know what I went through then. It all flashed across me, the hideous, sickening truth—my little innocent Rose was lost for ever. But I put away all my hard feelings towards her. I lifted her up, kissed her, and told her I would be a brother to her, since she'd none of her own. I promised her I would see Urban, and make him keep his word before the truth was suspected. And nobody here knows, only Rose and me, and now you, Tris. And I've come to see Urban."

Tristain had caught his trembling hand, and was wringing it wildly in the intensity of his emotion.

"Oh, the monster!" ejaculated he, between his set teeth; "and he has dared to go with his guilt into her pure presence!"

Joe fairly cried now, like a passionate school-boy.

"Oh, Tris, Tris! to think I must tell you it isn't so. I thought you understood. I dare not speak any plainer. She that was as innocent and pure as a baby, she's disgraced, Tris. She isn't our innocent Rose any longer."

"I wasn't thinking of Rose, Joe, poor, faithful Joe. I was thinking of another; the lady Urban intends to marry."

"By heavens! then there's another. A rich lady too, I'll be bound," cried Joe, gnashing his teeth together, like an angry wolf.

"Yes, a lady young, beautiful and wealthy too. Oh, Joe, Joe, how is he able to win them all away from true and honest hearts?"

"She shan't take away from Rose the only reparation he can give her. He shall marry Rose, if I have to murder him the next minute!"

"Joe, Joe!" cried Tristain, shuddering at the wild ferocity of his haggard face.

"I mean it. I tell you I will tear out his craven heart if he refuses to marry Rose. I thought you would be honourable enough to help me in this thing, Tris Worth!"

"So I will, Joe. But you mustn't go to Urban in this wild mood. Are not matters bad enough already, without your making them worse by rash deeds? I tell you, Joe, there's another to suffer by this matter. A true, noble, grand woman, more like

a queen than a girl. For her sake, and for the sake of poor little Rose, we must hold our anger in check, and try to work calmly, and search for the best mode of extrication from this unhappy plight."

"There is but one way—for him to marry Rose," said Joe, stubbornly.

"I think you are right," returned Tristain, slowly. "Oh, heavens! if Anna Merton loves him as such a heart as hers ought to love, it will be her death blow. Joe, Joe, don't ask me to be the one to strike the blow."

"This other girl, the rich one, he has won away from you, Tris, just as his evil wiles lured my Rose from me? Is that it?"

"That is it, Joe. You see you are not the only sufferer."

"Your trouble is bliss compared to my torment. This girl is rich, honoured, and unstained. She stands as high as ever for you; but look at Rose, my poor, fallen, dishonoured Rose. Oh, how my fingers itch for that villain's throat! I believe I could shoot him like a dog this very day, if it were not necessary for Rose's good name to be his wife. Tell me where to find him. What's the use of wasting time in idle talk?"

"I will send for him. He will be likely to be home at this hour. He has not had his breakfast yet."

"Why not go there? I am sure that would be best. You cannot be sure that he will attend to your letter. Come, Tris, go with me to his house."

"I suppose I can find it by looking at the Directory," said Tristain.

"What, haven't you ever been there?"

"No, Joe; Urban is a fine gentleman, and does not want a poor clerk's visit. No one here knows we are brothers."

"It is you who should be ashamed of the relationship," said Joe, sternly. "But come; every minute's delay is torture to me."

Tristain put on his coat.

"You will stop and have a cup of coffee with me, Joe?"

"Yes, maybe I can drink a little, but I cannot eat, it would choke me."

CHAPTER X.

WHEN the two young men called at the door of the aristocratic boarding-house the servant's greeting was:

"Mr. Worth is ill—cannot see anyone this morning."

"But our business is urgent," persisted Tristain. "That was his answer. Positively he could not see the best friend he had in the world," replied the servant, evidently used to importunity, and half closing the door.

But Joe's broad shoulder was suddenly thrust in between, and he answered, with resolution:

"Go back and tell him we will raise the whole street before we give up seeing him. Maybe if he isn't in readiness for his best friends, he won't mind an interview with his deadliest enemy."

The man stepped backwards, glanced at the fierce eye of the last speaker, and reluctantly went upstairs again.

He came down with a note, scrawled feebly:

"Send up your bills and I'll settle them next week."

Tristain glanced at the line, sickened anew by this evidence of continual annoyance from creditors, and turned to the man with an air of authority.

"We are to go up to his room. Tell us which door."

"Two flights, the first right hand," replied the servant, glancing apprehensively after them as they mounted the richly carpeted stairs.

Tristain found the door and quietly opened it.

Urban, in his rich scarlet dressing-gown with its fur trimmings, was sitting at the table really looking pale and dispirited, suffering physically as well as mentally from a night of intense anxiety spent over the gaming-table. He looked up with a nervous start at the sound of the unclosing door.

"Why, Tris, is it you? Why the deuce didn't you send up your names? There's two or three surly, insolent people I will not pay yet, just to spite them, and I thought—"

He paused abruptly, the words dying upon his whitening lips, for Joe had followed his cousin.

"You thought Tris had come alone, and you're not quite so glad to see me," said Joe, in a voice terrible from its calmness, because it betrayed by its hoarseness the mighty wrath held back. "However, Mr. Urban Worth, I have come with an account to settle, and you'll find you can't shake me off in your cowardly—"

"I didn't know I owed you anything, Joe," faltered Urban, instinctively stretching out a hand towards Tristain; "and I'm sure you are welcome."

"You lie there, Urban Worth. Why are you shaking like a sick monkey, and ready to fly to Tris for help? I know you well, you deceitful, cowardly sneak!"

"Joe, Joe," expostulated Tristain, "this isn't a manly way. Make your accusations without empty words."

"Empty words! by heaven, never before were words so full of meaning, or so well deserved. But you are right. I won't waste my strength. Urban Worth, I've come here for Rose Henderson. You know what she was when you came there with your artful ways, a sweet, innocent, pretty girl, who would have made me a good, true, and affectionate wife. You know what she is now, for you've had letters from her, letters which, if you had had the heart of a man, or a spark of honour, would have drawn you to her, though the way had been planted with thorns. But she's sent me now for the answer you wouldn't give. Are you going to marry her, Urban Worth?"

The miserable man started up from his chair, and glared at the speaker, every lineament betraying craven fear, every limb shaking with abject trepidation.

"Why, Tristain, what is the matter with Joe? I'm afraid his mind isn't right," faltered he.

"No," said Joe, grimly, "it isn't right, and it won't be till you have given me your promise in black and white."

"Urban," said Tristain, gravely, "you know if this charge be true. Indeed, your face has already answered it. There is but one course, for you to cover as much as lies in your power this shame and dishonour from sight. You must marry Rose."

"It is a conspiracy," cried Urban, stung at last into a little show of spirit. "I know very well, Tristain, you would like to have me out of the way. I stand decidedly in your light. You would like to win Miss Merton yourself."

"Be still!" thundered Tristain. "Drag not her pure name into this disgraceful affair. The matter is none of mine, except that the disgrace you bring upon my father's name and hearth must necessarily affect me."

"It is with me you are to deal, Urban Worth, and I swear to you one of us will die before I leave without the satisfaction I came for," exclaimed Joe, advancing a little nearer, and shaking his clenched fist into his pale face.

Urban stretched out his white hand towards the bell.

"I will call the servant. I will have the police here."

"Do so," sneered Joe. "It is a pretty case to be made public. It will entertain your aristocratic friends, no doubt."

Urban's hand dropped down. He looked up appealingly into the set face.

"Joe, Joe! I thought you wished to marry Rose yourself. I'll give you a handsome sum to set you up. Why don't you marry her? No one will know this!"

"Great heavens, Tristain! you hear him!" burst from Joe. "You hear this paragon, this hope of the Worth family! Who could blame me if I throttled him there where he stands, daring to offer me this insult? The black-hearted scoundrel!"

Urban read the horror and detestation in each face, and suddenly changed his tactics.

"Well, if there's no help for it, I suppose I must. What is it you want of me, Joe?"

"Sit down there, and write a letter to Mr. Henderson, and ask him for his daughter's hand in marriage, and sign it distinctly with your name."

Urban's shaking hand drew towards him the bronze stand which held the ink and pen, and in a few moments he had written the letter.

Joe took it up and looked it over carefully.

"That will do; now seal, direct, and give it to me."

"I can post it here. It will look better to have it posted here," said Urban, faintly.

"I will save you the trouble and postage. No doubt, small amount as the postage is, some of your creditors will accept it."

Joe took the letter, folded it in his handkerchief, and put it carefully into his pocket.

"Now," said he, "you are to come exactly a fortnight from to-day, and marry her, or I shall come and make you. You know me of old. When I begin to do a thing I do it. You needn't think of hiding, or getting away from me. I'll hunt you to the ends of the earth, and I'll advertise you in the newspapers, which will be the worst punishment for you."

He turned towards the door. Tristain went up to his brother and asked, in a voice of anguish:

"Urban, tell me truthfully, does Miss Merton love you? Did she say she did?"

"Of course she did," answered Urban, thankful to be able to stab in return. "She told me with her

own lips that she loved me better than anyone else in the world. This is a pleasant thing you have worked for her!"

Tristain groaned, and followed Joe. That poor fellow walked steadily until they reached Tristain's room again; then he sank down in a chair, shaking from head to foot, and icy cold.

Tristain ran hastily for restoratives. But it was a long time before Joe was able to stand up. He consented to lie quietly on Tristain's bed, while the latter went down to the warehouse to look after his business. When Tristain returned he found his cousin pale and grave, but able to set out again for home. The two young men clasped hands at parting, all words choked from their throats by the hard, dry sobs of bitter anguish.

Tristain went back to the counting-house, and performed his work in a strange, automatic manner, which even aroused the attention of Eustace Sattonstall.

"What's the matter with the paragon, father?" asked he, as Mr. Walter threw down the paper upon the table in the inner counting-house. "He's like a man in a dream."

"The foolish lad, I must take him in hand," observed Mr. Walter, testily; and, selecting one of the letters from a heap before him, he went into Tristain's room.

"Tristain," said he, "here's a matter for you to look after. I've had word from—the silent partner, old Anathema Mendon, you know, saying that there's something wrong at the iron-works. The new foreman is suspected of extensive pilfering, or connivance therewith. I can't go there myself, and Eustace hasn't wit enough to find out anything. What if you should go there for a few days, as if you were taking a rest, you know? I'm sure you look worn enough to be needing something of the sort. It's a terrible disease, this love, isn't it?"

Tristain could not smile at this sally. With all this weight of misery hanging upon him, it seemed to him he should never be able to smile again.

"I will go, sir, if you wish it," answered he.

Mr. Walter laid his hand on the young man's shoulder, and looked earnestly into his face with kindly eyes.

"My lad," said he, "is it so bad as that? Are you really so unhappy?"

"I am miserable enough, heaven knows!" burst from Tristain; "but you mistake the cause. Love is the least of my trials."

"When you are ready to seek my advice or to give me your confidence, you know I'm ready," returned Mr. Walter.

Tristain could not answer, his emotion choked his voice.

"About the investigation at the works. You will remain at Miss Merton's house, by express invitation thence. There is no hotel near, you know."

"I would rather not, if there be any other way!" cried out Tristain, sharply, shrinking at the very thought.

"The obligation will rest upon me, not yourself. It is my business which takes you there. Indeed, I would rather it should be so."

"I will go, then," answered Tristain, in a tone of compulsory resignation.

"To-morrow. We will try to manage here; but I shall miss you sadly. When you are here I have no anxiety or care."

He did not understand the stifled groan which came by way of answer, but indignantly thrust back the vague suspicion which arose to his mind.

Tristain saw his brother that morning before leaving town, and told him that he was going. But Urban was in a sullen mood, and would not listen to Tristain's earnest request that he would send a letter at once to acquaint Miss Merton with the change at hand.

"I will manage things in my own way. Leave me alone for that. Now I have given you my word to marry that country simpleton I think you might be content."

"Your word! Oh, Urban, what is it worth? For the first time I have made inquiries concerning you, and have heard the whole pitiable story. Good heavens, what a page for your poor trusting father to read! All three farms would not pay your debts, Urban; and a gambler, a cheat, a betrayer of innocence. Would to heaven that I could die to wipe out the black list of your misdeeds, for it humiliates me to the very dust to know that we are brothers. Think of your fair prospects in the commencement, the kindly trust and generous help bestowed upon you, and make what little reparation is in your power. Marry Rose; generously renounce Miss Merton's affection, and devote yourself to retrieve your character. All that I possess shall go to help you to settle this miserable affair."

"And leave you to marry Anna Merton!" cried Urban, with a sneer.

"Do you think she is a woman to love twice? No, no. I discarded that hope for ever when you told me she had confessed her love for you. Urban, Urban! hear the pleading of your good genius!"

"You never had any patience with me; you always hated me," said Urban, sullenly, his lip quivering. He looked ghastly and haggard.

The colour had left his cheeks; there were dark circles under his eyes, and his features had sharpened.

Tristain was moved with a new and strange compassion. Sorrow had softened his own heart, melted his resentment. A strong yearning came over him towards this petted idol of society, this darling of his parents, his own twin-brother. He put his hand on Urban's shoulder, and his voice shook, as he said, earnestly:

"Urban, I have been to blame myself. I was harsh and bitter in my resentments. I have a stronger nature, and my temptations have been fewer. I might have reasoned with you, upheld you, guided you. And I stood aloof in haughty indifference. It is not too late, even now. Let us begin again; let us be brothers indeed."

Urban's eyes filled with tears. His good angel indeed was pleading with him.

"Tris, you are generous. I don't deserve it of you," he faltered. "If I thought there was any way of retrieving. But you don't know the half."

"I know that Mr. Edgar has dismissed you from the partnership, and that one fashionable gambler named Dexter holds your notes for three hundred pounds, and—"

"Enough, enough! How then can you hold out hope to me?" faltered Urban.

"It is never too late, Urban. Let us make a clean breast of it. Mr. Sattonstall will help us; he is one of heaven's merciful ministering agents. Look you, I cannot stay longer now, but I will be thinking over a plan. Come down half way to the iron-works by the train to-morrow forenoon. There is a little retired station, Green Lawn, they call it. I will meet you there, and we can talk it over. We can start anew, brothers at last in heart as well as blood."

"I will come," answered Urban, his cheek yet wet with tears.

Tristain had been drawing on his glove. An impulse he himself could scarcely define would not let him go without something more. He stopped suddenly and kissed his brother.

"Purged by the fire, Urban," said he, "our hearts may be more trusty and reliable. We may be true, loving brothers yet."

Urban put his arms up, as Tristain remembered so often seeing him do in their old boyish days, twining them around their mother's neck, and for a moment his hot, parched lips clung to his brother's.

"Tristain, if I'm saved it will be by you," said he.

Tristain went away. And so the brothers parted. If they had known—if anyone could have told them, it was their last earthly glimpse of each other's living face! But no mysterious premonition whispered to either such a solemn thought.

Tristain went away with a sweet satisfaction in his own conquered animosity and a strong hope for his brother.

Urban sat down, thinking over his menacing dangers.

But in the midst of his conscience-stricken reverie came a trio of his gay acquaintances to take him out. His first weakness was now in consenting to accompany them. But, poor, helpless butterfly! he was glad to escape from his own thoughts. He went with them, he returned, and the swept and garnished heart was taken possession of by tenfold more evil spirits than before.

"I will not be forced to this low, miserable lot," said he. "Since fate has challenged me, I will e'en fight my best."

And he poured out glass after glass of wine, and drowned the remembrance of Tristain, honour, and integrity.

On the morrow he was pale and stern, but grimly resolute. A careful observer would have noticed that his wearing-apparel was removed from the closet, and packed into his trunks. The costly *bijouterie* of the dressing-table removed. He looked his doors carefully, and then took out a suit of plain, somewhat worn clothing, in which he dressed himself.

He seemed greatly interested by the effect, for he turned round before the long mirror, and took every possible view of himself.

Next he went to the toilet-table, and arranged his hair, carefully brushing the curls, which had hitherto been his pride, straight and lank, and combing it in the square fashion Tristain had carelessly adopted. He tried on an old low-crowned felt hat upon his head, and seemed satisfied with everything but his pet moustache, but a razor made instant havoc with that.

The change made by the removal of the moustache was marked. He was the very image of Tristain now, especially when he drew down his lips in the latter's grave sodateness.

Urban did not laugh as he sometimes might have done at his successful personation. He only filled another glass of wine, and swallowed it hastily as if it had been burning hot. Then he removed the hat, opened the portfolio on the table, and took out a slip of paper.

His hand was steady enough to fill in two figures and the date. Then he put it into his pocket-book, crushed the soft felt hat into his pocket, put on a light drossy overcoat, and his own glossy beaver, produced a false moustache, fitted it to his lip, and, taking his cane, walked noisily downstairs. He met a servant at the door.

"Well, Jim, I'm going down to have my moustache clipped," he said, stroking his lip, carelessly.

Urban Worth walked down the street, nodding and smiling, talking gaily with all he met, contriving in some way to allude to his moustache. He went finally into a small cigar-shop, with an oyster-room at the rear.

He came forth in the shabby suit, with smooth lip, Tristain Worth's representative, and walked swiftly down towards the business emporium.

He was absent from his rooms little more than an hour, returning as he came, with stylish overcoat, glossy beaver, and handsome moustache, locked his door again, hastily counted over a great pile of bank-notes, and hid them in his breast.

"Perdition-seize that steamer! She was advertised to sail to-morrow. It will take a week or more to mend that broken shaft," muttered he, and dropped into the chair where he had been sitting when Tristain kissed him.

CHAPTER XI.

Mrs MERTON appeared to Tristain in her superbly furnished parlour like a princess, that first evening of his arrival. He had seen her uncle only at dinner, and was tormenting himself, with a lover's mingled hope and dread, concerning her appearance, when left alone after a solitary tea, taken eagerly after an afternoon spent in the sweltering atmosphere of the iron-works.

Concluding that he was safely left to his own entertainment, he entered the parlour into which the servant ushered him, and hunted up a book of poems and a portfolio of engravings to beguile his by no means agreeable thoughts.

Sitting thus, half absorbed, and yet abstracted, he heard a rustle at the doorway, and arose involuntarily.

He had never seen her before in evening dress. She was a very woman, after all, this proud-spirited, queenly creature.

She had stolen upon him, determined to take his heart by storm, for the softly shining eye, the gently curved lip, betrayed her knowledge of the beautiful picture she made.

She wore a robe of golden silk, festooned here and there with little wreaths of lace, caught up by purple pansies, with dewy, golden eyes. A scarf of the same costly lace was thrown over her neck, shading its ivory fairness. Similar pansies decked her glossy hair linked from either side by a chain set with diamonds. A scintillating rainbow encircling the fair arm marked a bracelet of the same costly gems. A pair of snowy gloves, a cobweb handkerchief, and an ivory fan held carelessly in one hand, showed that she was really setting forth for some festive scene.

She stood a moment, either to give him an opportunity to behold and admire, or to compose herself. But there was still a soft crimson on her cheek as she glided forward and said:

"Good evening, Mr. Tristain! I was sorry to miss seeing you before. I have been away all day. One of my dear schoolmate friends is to be married to-morrow, and that has kept me busy. I have dressed early to be able to have a chat with you. Perhaps you will be so good as to read to me."

She said all this with a gracious smile on her lips. She could scarcely have been more cordial to Urban himself. Tristain was able through her composure to forget their last agitating interview, and to reply calmly, notwithstanding all the bewildering tumult occasioned by her presence.

"I presume you have heard from Mr. Sattonstall why I intrude upon you here?" he said, gravely.

"I heard from him last night. But a visit from you can never be an intrusion. Have you met with any success in your investigation?"

"I think I have discovered the whole plot. Another day will show."

"How shameful it is that there should be so much fraud and dishonesty," said she, indignantly.

Tristain only sighed in answer. He was thinking



[MISS MERTON WATCHES TRISTAIN.]

of Urban, and her innocent unconsciousness of the great trial before her. She saw the melancholy shade cross his forehead, and grew nervous, saying just what she intended to avoid.

"I was in hopes your spirits had improved, but I fear you are still unhappy."

"Ah, yes," replied Tristain, looking at her with a glance of tender compassion which puzzled and annoyed her. "Still unhappy. Yet I should not complain; it is the lot of all. No one should be unprepared."

"You speak, you look rather, as if there were a cloud hanging over my head," said she.

"Who can say? My dear Miss Merton, if it comes, you will try and bear it nobly? You will not be prostrated?" entreated he, in a feverishly eager voice.

She turned the diamond bracelet to and fro, seemingly in abstraction.

"I cannot imagine what you mean, Mr. Tristain," she said, almost pettishly. "There are so few avenues now for misfortune to approach me by. It can only be through my fortune. Some sudden defalcation, or embezzlement, some crash among the banks or the stocks perhaps, and Mr. Sattonstall has sent you to break it to me. Well, I am not so much alarmed. This place is safe to me, nobody can run away with that. How little real use I have for my wealth. It does not matter much."

"No, oh no; it is not that. It has nothing to do with your property."

"I am sure you are a mystery, Mr. Tristain. If I had dear friends, I should think something had happened to them. But you know how I stand—so entirely alone."

"Are you so invulnerable? Think again. Can no shaft reach you through—through your love," exclaimed Tristain, desperately.

Miss Merton flushed scarlet.

"My love, Mr. Tristain? what can you know about that?" cried she, haughtily.

"Would to heaven I did not!" ejaculated Tristain, with a look of anguish too genuine to be doubted. "This is inexplicable!"

And Miss Merton beat her fan against the table till the frail ivory snapped in pieces, and her dark eyes flashed angrily.

"I do not mean to anger you. Heaven knows how gladly I would risk anything to save you pain or grief. But if I know it is impossible, also know that nothing I can do will shield you, is it not kind to prepare you for the blow?"

Her proud look softened.

"I cannot doubt your sincerity or good will, Mr. Tristain; you have given good proof of both, but

I cannot conceive any possible explanation of your words."

It was his turn to be puzzled. He raised his clear, penetrating eyes to her beautiful face, and it again became crimson.

"Oh, Miss Merton!" exclaimed he, "I should be the happiest man alive if I thought you were free, entirely heart free. Will you give me that assurance?"

She bit her crimson lip, and the white fingers plucked impatiently at the pansies in her breast, but the proud head drooped lower and lower. Not a word answered Anna Merton. She stood there before him self-convicted.

"Oh, that I were dead! Urban, Urban, what terrible weight is on your soul!" ejaculated Tristain, hoarsely.

Miss Merton started, looked up eagerly, a glad, joyful light rippled across her eyes, and flooded her whole face.

"You think," exclaimed she, in a low, soft voice, "that I love, that I am to marry Urban Worth?"

"How could I doubt that you love him? He told me so himself. But I know you can not marry him," answered Tristain, not daring to look into her face since he had spoken his brother's name.

"We will talk about this another day. I hear the carriage coming to the door; I must be gone to the ball now."

She caught up a purple velvet mantle, flung it over her shoulders, courtesied and disappeared.

Hapless Tristain fell back, and tried vainly to drive away the memory of that radiant figure.

Miss Merton came down early to breakfast, but might have spared herself the rosy glow which mantled her face as she entered the room. Mr. Tristain, the servant informed her, had taken an early cup of coffee and gone away.

"I shall see him at dinner," she said, softly.

Nevertheless she was restless and uneasy, haunted with a strange disquiet; presently she put on her walking-dress, tied a veil over her face, and strolled away towards the iron-works.

Her heart gave a quick bound as she recognized Tristain's straight, stalwart figure moving swiftly towards the river.

"Great heavens! he was so utterly wretched. It was cruel in me to allow him to remain in ignorance. What is maidenly pride in comparison with such suffering as he experienced!" exclaimed she.

A wild fear took possession of her mind. Without a moment's hesitation she followed, even when he turned towards the railway station and took a seat in the train which came in a few moments. With

her veil over her face a few seats behind him, Miss Merton watched his grave, melancholy face with wistful, tender, and sometimes tearful eyes.

Half a dozen times she made a movement to go to him, and then sank back, blushing with womanly shame at the boldness of the thought.

At a small, obscure station Tristain left the train. Miss Merton stole out on the other side, and vanished behind a hedge, but within a place of observation.

Tristain walked into the tenantless, rude building which served for a station, and examined it closely. He came out with an air of disappointment, and looked all around the place, till, spying a man at work near by, he called to know if any gentleman had come by the last train down from town.

"Not a soul got out," answered the man, without looking up.

Tristain walked back with a gloomy brow.

"He has failed me. Heaven grant not intentionally!" she heard him mutter as he passed her.

To and fro passed the restless, pacing figure on the rough platform.

Motionless and silent as a statue stood Miss Merton, vaguely wondering why she had come, how she dared to stand there watching him. Nothing whispered that it was a good angel which had moved her to this strange proceeding; that it was giving into her hands the priceless power to save for Tristain Worth something more precious far than his life—his honourable name and spotless integrity.

The train soon came rattling down from town, and, panting and snorting, made a moment's pause at the station.

There were half a dozen passengers to leave.

Tristain scanned each face earnestly, and then with an angry eye entered the train.

Miss Merton had just time, without a second to spare, to enter the carriage.

She followed him as he walked slowly and disconsolately towards the iron-works, and somehow felt relieved that he never left her sight, for, after exchanging a few words with a man outside, he turned and walked towards her. Miss Merton tremulously raised her veil; he did not raise his eyes from the ground, but passed on, abstracted and melancholy. She was thankful to meet her uncle presently driving out in his luxurious phaeton. Miss Merton stopped him with an imperious gesture.

"Go on, and overtake Mr. Tristain. That is him by the great tree. Make him ride with you, and on no account let him go away out of your sight. Keep him out as long as you can."

(To be continued.)



[MRS. RAYMOND AND DORA.]

CAPTAIN FRITTY.

CHAPTER III.

"I KNOW what you are thinking about, Fritty; you expect that man will come himself in the steamer to look at the girl. That is why you asked if I had saved any dress out of the last lot which came. Well, well, he little thought that when he sent that fine clothing that it would all be sold to swell your hidden gold-chest. But it is right, right enough that we should save all we can. Who can tell but that our own may want it yet, and what does it matter that the girl should be finely dressed in this desert spot? I laughed with scorn when I saw that box of embroidered slippers. He cheats his conscience by making it up to her in fine presents, little guessing how they add to our annuity. Though it was a pity, I could not help thinking it was, to send away that set of ruby ornaments. How they would have twinkled and shone, hanging from her little ears, lighting up her eyes, and showing off against her curls. She is handsome, and much as I hate her I cannot help owning that."

"You have clothes enough to look respectable in case he does come? She'll make mischief if she can, but I fancy he'll be so afraid of betraying his own secret that he won't give her a chance to talk to him. And, after all, he may not come. It would be running a risk; more, I think, than he would venture. There's one thing, there's no chance for him to repent and undo everything."

"Except on a death-bed, Fritty. Some villains are too cowardly to confess during their life time, and not brave enough to go in silence into the grave."

"We'll hope for the best, and do what we can to make ourselves secure from any exposure. I have got a large sum laid by, Marie."

"Ah, but the wiser investment will be lost. Who can be sure he will not come to us and turn from us in loathing? Who will promise us his love and sympathy?"

"Don't creak any more, Marie. I'm sick enough now of the whole affair. I'm going to bed."

Meantime, at the little square opening of glass which formed the attic window, the hot face of Dora was pressed, her eyes peering forth into the blackness of the clouded sky.

The blood still throbbed warmly in her veins, and the scarlet flush of anger was still lurking on her cheeks.

She had pushed away the thick mass of curls—

her broad white forehead, but made no movement towards removing her clothing.

The tallow candle, which she had lighted since her entrance into the low, shelving apartment, was burning low, and by its light the poor, mean furnishing of the room looked still more dim and forlorn.

At the window, with her beautiful face, glistening eyes and scarlet cheeks turned yearningly towards the darkness and storm, stood Dora, in a tremour of excitement, and she exclaimed, with fierce, intense bitterness:

"How could I be absurd enough to hesitate for a single moment? Welcome howling wind, wild rain, raging sea! Welcome black night, unknown world, untried fate. The eagle will find wings to-night, and soar anywhere—anywhere to escape from this prison! Though the hand that helped me were thrice as unwelcome as that of Jonas Weston's, I would go. Though this storm were a howling gale, I would make the venture. Nothing surely can happen to me that will be more terrible than this."

She remained at the window until her limbs grew benumbed, then she sat down on the rude box which served alike for chair and table, and folded her arms, the colour fading out from her face and leaving it strangely cold and stern for such youthful features.

When she heard the noise made by Captain Fritty below, fastening up the door, and raking out the fire, she started, glanced hastily around her, laid her thick shawl close at hand, extinguished the light of the candle, and sat there perfectly motionless, until the last sound from below had died away into utter stillness.

Jonas Weston, his waterproof cloak wrapped closely around him, his hat tied down, was crouching under the great rock at the foot of the cliff, counting almost every moment, and alternately giving way to hope and fear.

Would the girl fall him at the last moment?

The storm might well intimidate a bolder spirit than hers; yet somehow he relied on her appearance. He would not go away, but kept his post, and presently, above the clamour of the wind, through the hoarse roar of the surf, he caught the tones of a clear, sweet voice in carefully guarded accents:

"Ho, Jonas Weston! are you there?"

Jack scrambled to his feet with alacrity and hurried from under the rock. The moon, sailing behind the black clouds, invisible though she might be, still served her purposes, and softened into dull gray what had otherwise been inky blackness. Jonas saw the outline of a slender form, and the flutter of loose garments.

"You have come, Dora!" exclaimed he, his voice betraying his intense joy.

"Did you doubt it?" asked she, as she gave her hand to his eager clasp.

"I was half afraid the storm would frighten you." "Nothing will frighten me which lies between me and freedom. How dark it is! I know every step here, and I loathe it so! When we are at the Cove I may need your assistance. You will put out to sea at once, will you not?"

"Yes," answered Jonas Weston; and inwardly he muttered, "Aye! I would put out though the waves rose mountains high."

They groped their way, step by step, until they were under the shelving roof of the cliff. Then Jonas produced a small pocket lantern, and they were able to make swifter progress.

Not a sign of a living creature abroad in the storm was visible until they reached the rude pier where the fishermen unloaded their mackerel. There, as Jonas silently lowered his companion into a skiff rocking violently with the waves, Dora was startled by seeing a man rise up from under a tarpaulin, and growl out:

"This is a curious kind of a night, Jonas, for such doings. I'm half drowned, like a rat in a hole. Do you think I'm going to be foolhardy enough to try to row out to the schooner? I swear—"

He stopped abruptly, for though it was too dark to distinguish features, or even forms, he perceived that his comrade had a companion.

"Stop growling, Mat, will you? When you engage to do anything I expect you to carry it out," said Jonas, in a tone of authority, showing his lantern enough to find the tiller rope and the oars, but taking care that its gleams should not fall upon the young girl, who dropped down upon the seat, crossed her arms under her shawl, and bent her head in order to defy the sweeping rain and wind.

"But this is pretty near madness," expostulated Mat, shaking himself like a water-spaniel. "How are we to find the schooner in this darkness?"

"That's my business, Mat. Yours is to take the oars, and work with a will. It's only a short distance to pull. I gave orders for them to move this way as soon as it was dark."

Mat kept his indignation to himself. The lantern had showed him Jonas Weston's face, and an expression there which told him better than words could have done that, come what would, his orders were to be obeyed.

"The consequences be on your own head then, Mr. Jonas," soliloquized he, and sat down to the oars.

"There is no danger, no cause whatever for

alarm," observed Jonas, and the tender cadence of his voice betrayed that the reassuring words were for someone besides Mat.

"When we turn round this point of rock I shall see the signal lantern; or, if it be too thick for that, Jim will send up a rocket every few minutes. All that there is for you to do is to pull your heartiest at the oars. I will take care of the course. Whew; there's a puff for you."

All bent down to resist a squall of wind which struck them like a blow, and tossed the light skiff like an egg-shell, sending a white-capped wave breaking over them.

It was several minutes before the oars were again in their places, and the drenched inmates of the skiff properly in their seats.

"It is a night, Jonas," growled Mat, puffing like a porpoise as he took another pull at the oar.

Jonas had turned his attention to Dora. Reaching out his hand, he silently drew her to the same seat he occupied, and put her hands on the iron ring fastened there.

"Keep hold of that," said he, "and brace your feet against the plank below. We shall be out of this before long."

"I am not afraid," whispered Dora, in return.

"Now, Mat, pull away. I'm coming in a minute to relieve you."

"Aye, aye; but it's easier said than done, Jonas. The old dolphins underneath are waking up. Hold on; there she comes again."

And once more the wind heaped, like a maddened spirit, and with a terrible roar from out some invisible cavern, the water hissed and seethed, and the skiff rose and fell like a straw in the grasp of the whirlwind.

"By George! this is a night for you. I declare I don't know as we can go on after all," grumbled Jonas, and as the aspect grew every moment more menacing he bent suddenly down and asked:

"Dora, what shall I do? I will abide by your decision. It is a rough night—especially for you."

The girl never hesitated for a moment, but answered, swiftly:

"If I am to decide, I shall say, go on."

"What is it, Jonas?" asked Mat, shouting to be heard.

"Go on," returned Jonas, in a voice of wild triumph, "though every plank gives way beneath us."

"What mischief is he up to?" queried Mat, bending his brawny arms to the work that was worthy of their iron sinews.

"Ho; there is Jim's rocket. Steady, Mat; ease her till this puff is over. Then I'll take the oars, and do you steer."

Nearly two hours of incredible exertion, and they were at last by the schooner's side.

Dora, drenched and shivering, but with a jubilant smile on her face, was lifted to the deck, and did not seem to heed the gaze of the two rough-looking men on the narrow deck.

"We have poor cabin accommodations, Dora," whispered Jonas; "but such as they are you had better accept them. You'll find dry clothing at least."

He pointed towards the narrow companion-way and steep stairs which gave admittance to a sorry apology for a cabin; and Dora, by the feeble glimmer of the lantern, went down.

Jonas Weston turned to his men.

"We have had hard work to keep her from dragging."

"We must rig up another bower," said the foremost man.

"We'll let her scud rather," answered Jonas, walking to the bow, and beginning to haul in the chain.

"What! the old boy?" began one of the men.

"That's it exactly. Old Nick—nothing short of it—has got possession of him," observed Mat, emphatically.

"You don't mean, Skipper Jonas, that you're going to move the schooner in all this storm!" cried the first sailor.

"Exactly; you've stated the case precisely," replied Jonas, trying his best to keep his voice calm.

"This is as good a wind as you'd ask to send along over to the strait! Rather more than a capful, to be sure; but I know how to manage this craft, I think. We'll have this night's cruise to brag of. Heave in there."

"But it's as dark as pitch, and a tremendous sea on."

"You've been out on many darker nights; you know that, you cowardly lubber. You can see all the ropes and the mast, and without the lamp could count how many are on deck. Pooh! it's rather breezy, and slightly rough. But I'm going to be up in the channel by daybreak. Heave ahead there, my hearty!"

With that prompt obedience so instinctive with a good seaman the men went to work, and the schooner was presently running along under double reefs.

Jonas stood by the wheel, with his eye on the compass.

"I've run this trip times enough to feel it out in the dark," he muttered; "though I don't often make the knots in this style. Come what may I shan't back down. I've set my mind to the thing, and I'll see it out."

He ground his teeth as he said the words, and glanced back towards the island defiantly. Then, turning round again, gave all his attention to the work before him.

Six hours he stood there, clinging to the support with one arm, and holding the wheel in his iron grip, buffeted by the winds, deluged by the spray, but stier, and grimly resolute, turning only now and then to give his comrades the orders.

"Shake out the other reef, Mat," "Tack, man, tack," "Look out, there's a bower coming," while the little craft, lying on one side, shot through the dark waters as if propelled by a Triton's arrow.

At length there came a hoarse exclamation of relief.

"All right; there's the light-ship. Didn't I tell you, boys, I'd bring her over the track? Now we have only to drift into the channel. If it be too rough I'll see what can be done."

The men had uttered a low cheer, unable to refuse their tribute of admiration.

"He's plucky, anyhow," said Mat. "There isn't another in these parts that would have done this thing."

"Now, Jim, you take the helm and keep her steady for ten minutes. I want to run into the cabin for that time," said Jonas, shaking off the wet, and staggering across the deck to the companion-way.

The hanging lamp burning dimly showed him the graceful figure seated on the rude stool at the tiny table, with her white arms crossed listlessly, and her head drooping down.

She looked up eagerly, with that rare, thrilling smile of hers. How beautiful she was, Jonas Weston never seemed to have observed it one half so much before.

"Well, Dora," said he, triumphantly, "we are well on our way. The most dangerous portion of the course is left behind. The light-ship is at our right, and I think the worst of the storm is over."

"It is so tantalising that I cannot see the way, and yet, without doubt, the darkness is best," said she.

"And you do not repent?" he asked.

"No. I did not even a little while back, when it seemed to me we were hurled down to the very lowest depths. I did not repent then. But I have been thinking, wondering, if they will find any means to pursue us, and questioning beside what is to become of me after I land. I have been so wild, you see, that I have only had thought for one thing alone—to escape from that island—from their hold. Do you think I am really safe?"

"We will talk of that another time. I have everything safely planned. Do not allow anything to disturb your happy anticipation of the pleasant day we shall enjoy to-morrow. I mean to take you over the whole town, and give you a ride into the country beside. And, by the way, you will find those goods I bought for you in that upper drawer."

"You are very kind to me, Jonas."

"Why shouldn't I be, dear Dora? I don't pretend though that it is all for nothing, and that makes me think of what I want so much."

He searched in a box on the table, and brought out a small prayer-book, and opened it at a ribbon mark.

"See, Dora, here is the marriage service. I mean to take you to a clergyman when we are on shore, but somehow I want the assurance of your good faith now. Look, this is for you to repeat, and the other's mine. I suppose the same heaven which listens to a priest's words must listen to ours. Lift up your head, Dora, and read it—there, will you?"

"Why not?" said Dora. "You told me the price of my liberty. I am ready to pay it. Besides, I admire you very much to-night, Jonas. It is grand to see anyone so fearless and resolute—you and even these rude sailors."

They stood together beside the table, with the open book before them, and Jonas, who was no novice, having witnessed many a marriage ceremony, took her hand, and began at once, in a hushed, reverent voice, reading the responses.

Dora followed him quietly, without the slightest shrinking. When they had finished Jonas kissed her, put a ring upon her finger, and said, exultingly:

"And now you acknowledge that I have a claim upon you—that you are as much my wife as if a clergyman had married us—as he will when we land."

"Yes, Jonas," answered Dora, turning the ring to and fro on her finger.

"Now I must go back to my post. I am glad you are not sea sick. I was afraid of it. Keep up a good heart, my darling."

He kissed her again, and bounded up the stairs, pausing just one moment ere he reached the deck to murmur, exultingly:

"The prize is mine. Now I am safely on my way to fortune. I know her well. She will consider herself bound come what will; even if she discovers that I have ferreted out this secret of her mysterious claim upon a noble fortune. Ha, ha! love and fortune both in my grasp. Well done, Jonas Weston, well and worthily done!"

At that very moment, through the howling of the wind, the splash of the waves, came sharply the sound of a tolling bell, a shrill steam-whistle, a wild outcry. Simultaneously came a powerful shock which shook the light craft like the blow of a lion upon a hapless mouse. The schooner trembled, reeled backward, seemed a moment poised mountains high in mid-air, and then was sucked down—down—immense volumes of water rushed across—the great foreign steamer swept on to the spot she had lately occupied—and the darkness, wind, and rain were left; but only drifting fragments rising to the surface, tossing on the white-capped waves, betrayed the terrible doom of the schooner.

Through the tumult and shock had rung out the hoarse, despairing yell of Jonas Weston's instantaneous consciousness of the appalling danger. A moment later and there was one short scream in a woman's voice. Then the elements held their wild way, as if exulting in demonic glee over the catastrophe. For a few moments nothing else could be heard but the maddened rush of the wind, the roar and splash of the water. It was the dying throes of the storm. Though the waves ran high for many hours, the wind died down to a light breeze, and in less than an hour the clouds broke away, and the moon shined out as calmly and peacefully as if there had been no disturbing influence below.

Of course on board the great steamer there had been a wild panic at the threatened danger, and the shock of the collision.

It was some little time before the tumult could be quelled, and then the dying cry of the storm had prevented prompt movements on the part of her officers.

Even before their own safety from danger had been ascertained the commander had set blue lights upon the deck to illumine the darkened scene and give encouragement of help to any floating survivors of the hapless craft.

They sent forth halloo after halloo, but no answer came.

A group of hastily robed passengers were standing near the captain, shivering with awe and horror.

"See!" cried one of them, a tall lady, leaning tremblingly on a young man's arm; "what is that a little to the right? It looked to me like a woman's garment. The wave has covered it. No! there it is again! Ah, if it were daylight! This blue light bewilders one."

"But we must be thankful for anything," answered her companion, "to disperse the darkness we have had all the night."

The captain had heard her. His keen eye, used to pierce the gloom and detect any sign or speck upon the water, gazing in the direction indicated.

"I see!" cried he, sharply. "There is certainly a fragment of the wreck, and something on it. Send up another rocket, boys—farther to the right. Lively, lively!"

"Aye, aye, sir."

And with its dull thurr the rocket sped upwards. As it broke the fiery illumination gave a brief glimpse of the desired spot.

There certainly was a floating object, and a clinging figure, with a flutter of white drapery.

Everyone aft saw it, and a low murmur of excited sympathy arose from the passengers.

The commander looked anxiously at the trembling billows, and glanced around.

"I'm ready, sir," said one of the mates, quickly.

"It will need caution. The sea runs very high; but you may try. Lower away at the lifeboat there. Steady, steady, or you will swamp her. Man her with volunteers."

The excited group, fore and aft, watched with strained eyes and scarcely beating hearts, while the gallant fellows put off with great difficulty and the most strenuous exertions in the direction of that floating wail.

The steamer was held nearly stationary, and lights and rockets kept steadily burning.

What a shout arose when it was plain that they had attained their object, and were coming back. Then for the first moment since the collision the captain's stern brow unbent.

A limp, helpless figure was handed up to the arms waiting to receive it, and carried at once into the ladies' cabin.

"A woman, sir; and she was alone upon a door floating with the waves," reported the young officer,

CHAPTER IV.

as he bowed in response to the congratulatory greeting of the passengers. "She was insensible when I found her. But I don't think she's dead."

"And no sign of anyone else?" asked the captain.

"None at all, sir; nothing that I could find."

"Poor fellows! poor fellows! there's small chance, then, but that the whole crew have gone to the bottom!"

"I think there is a barque anchored off there to the right. I am sure I made out her masts."

"Where was her light?"

"The men saw it once, but the spray was tossing so against that I lost it."

"Well, I don't see that there is anything for us to do but to go on. I don't see also why they didn't make us out in time to keep away, for we had all our lights burning."

"But the fog has been like a blanket half a dozen times. Poor fellows! it is all over with them."

He walked into the cabin when he had given orders for proceeding, and found the stewardess and the lady passengers hard at work over the still insensible survivor, with the ship's surgeon standing beside them. The tall lady in the black dress was chafing vigorously at the slender hands, now and then glancing with astonishment at the little bare feet, as daintily formed as those of an Amphitrite.

It was very long before her efforts were rewarded, but at length, with many painful struggles, life and breath returned, and then Dora, pallid, but lovely still, pushed back the damp mass of clinging curls, and looked around her.

"Oh, Jonas, I am saved! I am not drowned!" she exclaimed.

"My poor child," said the tall lady in black, "you are indeed saved out of the very jaws of death."

Dora had seen now the row of anxious, interested, curious faces. She gazed at them one by one.

"Jonas is not here," she said, slowly.

There was a dead silence, and among the women slow-falling tears. She understood the meaning.

"Am I the only one saved?" she asked presently, in a very low voice.

"The only one," answered that same lady, whose affectionate heart had been deeply touched.

Dora hid her pale face in her hands, as she murmured:

"Poor Jonas! Poor Jonas! He gave his life to give me liberty." And then, as the thought of her own situation came across her, she burst into a wild wail of grief. "Oh, what shall I do? What shall I do? I am all alone in this wide world. I have not a single friend."

"My child, if you have been good how is that possible?" said the lady, gently, with the tenderest compassion in her voice.

Dora drew away her hands, looked at the speaker long and earnestly, and then glanced along the row of attentive faces. Again she gazed at the lady. She stretched out her hand, and said, in a thrilling voice of desperate appeal:

"You are good. A kind lady. I can see that you are. Will you be my friend?"

"Dear child," answered the lady, the tears glistening in her mild eyes, "I will, if there be no one else. I certainly will."

"Then I will tell you my story," said Dora, with a slight air of dignity which made one or two women shrink back, "and, if you please, I will tell it to you alone."

"Can you walk yet? I will take you to my own cabin. I can find you, perhaps, better-fitting garments than these so hastily improvised for your use."

And Mrs. Ralph Raymond, giving some secret message to her son, the handsome young gentleman who looked over the captain's shoulder from the doorway, put her arm around the girl's waist, and guided and supported her tottering steps into one of the most spacious cabins.

The passengers, all of whom were soon keenly interested, remained in the saloon, discussing the catastrophe and this singular introduction into their midst of so young and lovely a girl, and waiting impatiently for the lady's reappearance.

It was nearly two hours before they heard a sound beyond the low murmur of a sad, sweet voice. Then the door was opened suddenly. Mrs. Raymond came out and walked composedly to her son, who was quite as curious and impatient as the rest.

"Oswald," said she, "my heart is strangely moved towards this girl. I shall take her under my protection."

He looked amused and somewhat satirical, but bowed with ready acquiescence.

"As you please, most wise and worthy of mothers. You know I am never foolish enough to appeal from your judgment. I always said you had a fairy gift of intuition. You know the true from the false, the good from the bad, through any disguise. When will you introduce me to my new sister?"

MADAME MARIE slept late the morning after the storm, for it had been far into the night before her perturbed and restless mind could calm itself into quiet. She was roused by her husband's voice from the kitchen.

"Here, dame! I say, dame, are you going to sleep all day? I've been over to the Cove and back, and I expected to find breakfast ready for me. Where's Dora? It is really time you made her of some use."

Madame Marie glanced at the clock, and hurried through her ablutions.

"Bless me! so late? I overslept myself certainly. I must call Dora to set the table while I'm frying the fish."

"If her high mightiness has recovered from last night's disdain," observed Captain Fritty, disconcertedly.

"What's the matter, Fritty? You look angry and vexed."

"Well, I had made up my mind to go up to the port and learn about the steamer. I was going in Jonas Weston's boat. I went down to the Cove this morning to see about it, and the schooner is gone. Whether the fellow was foolhardy enough to go last night one can't tell; only the craft isn't there, that's certain."

"Where can Dora be? I've called twice."

"Sulky, no doubt; just go up and see what she is about!"

Madame Marie set her fish on the fire, and then went up the stairs to the attic. Only a moment after, Captain Fritty heard her shrill cry:

"*Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* Fritty, we are ruined, we are undone. Come here, Fritty!"

Captain Fritty went up the steep ladder, rather than staircase, with great bounds. Madame Marie's tall spare form was at the threshold, one hand pushing open the door, showing him the empty room, the unpressed bed, the silent, deserted prison cage, from which the eagle had flown.

"I see it all!—that wicked Jonas Weston—the schooner that has sailed!" ejaculated Madame Marie, making a frantic little pantomime, with nodding head and gesticulating hands.

"The infamous scamp!" growled Captain Fritty. "I'll hunt him down as I would a wolf. And when I find her and bring her back I'll clip the eagle's wings, so that there can be no farther fear of flight."

He turned, again down the stairs.

"Just now, when this very steamer may bring the master," muttered he, in accents of concentrated wrath.

"What will you do, Fritty?" asked his wife.

"I'll offer Dick Hayen money enough to tempt him to take me in his yacht; and I'll run up to that schooner if she floats on salt or fresh water. You needn't care about the breakfast. I won't stop for anything. Every minute gone is a chance lost of finding them."

He pulled off his old coat, went to the closet for his better garments, and hurried out of the house, thrusting his arms into the sleeves of his coat as he scrambled down the cliff.

Madame Marie looked after him with an anxious eye. Then suddenly she exclaimed:

"Well, it is odd that we have made no other search for her. I wonder why we both feel certain that she has gone with Jonas Weston?"

And then she went swiftly and searchingly over the whole cottage, looking behind the doors, peeping into the few closets, and even getting down on her knees to peer under the old bedstead. All in vain. And she returned to her old seat on the low stone at the outer door, clasped her long arms around her knees, her head drooping forward, her pale, keen eyes fixed upon the water, still breaking in long swells upon the shore.

"The eagle has found her wings of a truth," muttered she. "But will she discover the right eyrie?"

She kept her position until she saw the yacht glide out from the screening rocks of the Cove, shaking out its white sails, and skimming the water like a sea-gull.

Then she arose and went into the cottage to her work, muttering:

"It is enough for me to worry about my own affairs. I'll let Fritty manage this one."

Captain Fritty was in the mood for savage management, could he only have laid his hand upon the girl; but Dora was far away, speeding along with the great steamer, widening and widening the space which lay between them.

The yacht went on over the waves, and Captain Fritty, with a glass in his eye, kept vigilant watch over the broad surface of gleaming blue. He gave utterance to an oath when they came bounding on into the channel, and still no sign of the schooner.

But the master of the yacht was watching a plank drifting towards them.

He took the glass presently, looked long and sharply, then gave a low whistle. And, dropping the glass, he walked to the bows, and spoke to a man stationed there.

"Stand by to lower the skiff, Dan. If my eyes don't deceive me there's a man lashed to that board drifting down to us. Some poor fellow blown off from a yard in the gale last night, I'll warrant."

Captain Fritty heard him, and came to his side.

"I hope you ain't going to lose any time, skipper."

"No more than I can help. But I'm not the man to steer away from a shipmate in distress. Stand by, Dan; perhaps we can secure the plank without the boat. There she comes! It's a man, certain sure."

The next few minutes were full of keen excitement and occupied by swift and gallant effort; at their close a pallid, unconscious, dripping form, lashed by along woollen scarf to the plank, was extended on the deck.

The skipper bent down and pulled open the wet flannel shirt, and put his ear to the heart, then exclaimed, joyfully:

"It beats faintly. He is nearly exhausted, but we can bring him round. One arm is broken, do you see? Poor fellow! he has run a narrow chance."

Captain Fritty stood looking on gloomily; but suddenly, as the wet, shaggy locks were parted from the face, he sprang forward with a yell, rather than shout:

"It is Jonas Weston!" he exclaimed.

"As sure as I am a sinner you're right," responded the skipper, in accents of keen surprise, as he bent closer to examine the insensible face.

"There's been some pretty rough work this night past, you may bet your life on that, or hearty, strong Jonas Weston wouldn't be reduced to such weakness as that. Dan, hunt him up a little brandy, and have some hot water and dry blankets. We'll see what we can do for him, and you, Nick, keep an eye upon the track. It's plain his schooner is not very near here or they'd be looking for him."

Captain Fritty was tearing to and fro along the narrow deck.

"What has happened?" muttered he. "He couldn't have been out in a boat so far from shore as this. It was a terrible night, but Jonas was a splendid pilot, and knew the coast, every curve and bar of it, and the schooner was staunch. But how comes he here in this wretched plight? and where is the girl?"

It seemed hours instead of minutes, the time occupied in resuscitating the sufferer, to his tortured mind, and the moment Jonas was able to open his eyes, and make a feeble attempt at speech, Captain Fritty, with stern, vindictive face, confronted him, and his imperious voice demanded:

"Jonas Weston, where is Dora?"

Jonas had partly raised himself on one elbow, and was staring around him bewilderedly. At that name and the question a strong shudder shook him. He closed his eyes and sank back again, ill and faint.

"Don't be harsh, man," said the skipper, shaking his head reprovingly, "to a fellow just clear of death's grip and horror."

Jonas heard the voice of his friend and comrade, unclosed his eyes again, and looking at him faltered:

"Dixon, is it you? Then I am not out of the world yet? I don't understand—"

"Nor I, Jonas. But I'm glad we chanced to be in time to pick you up. Where's your schooner?"

Jonas shuddered again, and bit his lip savagely as he replied:

"She was run down last night by some cursed steamer or other. I only hope she has gone to the bottom too!"

"What! a collision? And where are the rest?" Strong Jonas Weston spread his two hands over his white face to hide the starting tears.

"Gone down, I suppose. Heaven have mercy on them."

Captain Fritty leaped forward savagely.

"Do you mean that Dora is drowned too?"

Jonas turned away his head, shut his eyes again, and relapsed into silence.

"I will have the truth out of you," cried the old man, seizing his shoulder, and fairly shaking him in his rage. "Do you deny that my niece stole away with you last night?"

"Shipmate," gasped Jonas, "will you give me a place to lie in where I can be quiet until my strength comes back?" and he fixed his eyes imploringly on the skipper.

"Yes, yes, Jonas. I'll help you down below, and you shall go to sleep, and you'll wake up all right. Avast there, Captain Fritty, you can have your talk another time. It ain't exactly fair now."

"But I say he shall answer me now. I will not put off!" foamed Captain Fritty. "Jonas Weston, answer me this moment, or I'll shake out what little breath you have in your miserable body. Was Dora on your schooner?"

Jonas was roused by the threat into something of his usual spirit. His eye flashed a little as he answered:

"Yea, Dora was on the schooner. She begged to go with me, and I was willing. Now are you satisfied, old man?"

And Jonas turned away his face again, so that its expression of horror and remorse could not be seen. "Then she is drowned! *Mon dieu!* Dora is drowned," repeated Captain Fritty.

Jonas groaned, and clenched his still powerless right hand.

"I know nothing. The shock stunned me or something struck my head," murmured he. "When I came to myself I was in the water, dashing to and fro like a cork, and one arm was thrown around a plank. How or where I got it I can't tell. The wind was howling like so many devils, and it was as dark as ink. I had a confused sense of what had happened. I worked at the scarf round my neck, got it loose, and lashed myself as well as I could to the plank; twice I shouted, but the wind hurled back my voice as if it had been the chirping of a sparrow. Then something was dashed against me. I don't know what it was, but I fancy I broke this arm, for I can't move it, and then I felt myself going off into a kind of faint. That's all I know till you found me here."

Captain Fritty did not then burst forth into the frenzy Jonas had expected. He turned on his heel and went away, walked to and fro, his head hanging down, his eyes half closed, his mouth set sternly, full an hour, only looking up once, to tell the skipper to keep on the track, and be on the look-out for any drifting object.

Jonas went down to the cabin with one of the men to look after his arm, which began to pain him violently. As he passed Captain Fritty muttered, "to have escaped would have been ruin; but if she be dead that is another thing."

Jonas caught the words, and looked back, inwardly ejaculating:

"I have not done with you yet, Captain Fritty. I'll ferret out this secret yet—the whole of it, even though poor Dora is gone. Poor Dora! Poor Dora! I'm more sorry for her than for the loss of this fortune which I'm sure has slipped through my fingers. And I felt so certain of success. Curse the luck! And all my property has gone with the schooner! I'm down with a vengeance."

The last ejaculation was made aloud, in a bitter, discontented voice, as he dropped wearily into his berth, in the small, low cabin of the yacht.

"Don't be discouraged, Jonas. You'll take a turn up again before long. Besides, seems to me you ought to be thankful you're not like the other poor fellows."

"Poor fellows, indeed," muttered Jonas, with a twinge of remorse. "And they were opposed to the trip, too. It was hard on them, that's true. Tell Hayen to keep a sharp look-out, and to make inquiries if he can hail any craft. It is barely possible they got some spar or plank to save themselves by. There was a new door I was going to put to the cabin lying somewhere on the deck, and a pile of planks which must have washed off, for this one saved my life."

"And what about the girl?" asked the sailor. "Were you really running away with pretty Dora, Jonas?"

"She was running away from Captain Fritty. I do believe I promised to take her to the town, she pleaded so hard. And that's all about it. Don't talk any more. If this arm wouldn't twitch with the pain I'd go to sleep."

(To be continued.)

LATE TO DINNER.

MR. YOUNGHUSBAND wore a very pleasant face, and there was no reason in the wide world why he should not.

He walked along with a most delighted air, as one should do whose temporal matters were all conveniently adjusted. He had the prettiest wife in the town, and the pleasantest house. His business was in a very prosperous condition; and altogether there was nothing at that moment, and nothing in prospect, that could bring a cloud on the countenance of Mr. Lovell Younghusband.

So he glanced in the shop windows as he walked along, and considered how such and such a dress would become his darling Emma. He studied the temptations in the jewellers' windows. He mentally measured the carpets. He stopped long before the print and picture shops, and with curious eyes surveyed the house-furnishing establishments. Everything attracted his attention; and the motive and thought in all his speculations was Emma—still Emma.

He was not only self-satisfied, but doubly so;

satisfied not only with himself, but with his other self—a most complacent and very agreeable woman. So full of the things he would say, and of the pleasures and purchases he would propose to his wife—the very happiest, most beaming, and most ecstatic individual in the whole town, Mr. Lovell Younghusband stood upon his own door-step at last.

He looked up and down the square, as if to say, "who but me!" He was ready to welcome the light, airy step of his Emma when he should open the door; for he calculated that, she must have peeped through the blind, and known of his coming.

So she had, but she did not rush to meet him, nevertheless. Neither was she in the parlour. Nor was she in the dining-room. But, if he saw nobody, he smelt something. There was, throughout the whole house, a flavour of burnt vegetables and spoiled gravies; and, as he somewhat impatiently scented these odours, the premonition came upon him of a spoiled dinner.

That certainly was not pleasant; but he magnanimously resolved to make no complaints, as his Emma was but a young housekeeper. And he had more than once said to her, and she to him, that they never would permit such common-place things as meals to disturb the harmony of their sympathetic and loving souls. But, however, love to the contrary notwithstanding, a spoiled dinner is hard to bear.

Mr. Younghusband glanced at the pretty French clock over the mantelpiece, and saw that he was an hour behind time. If his conscience smote him for his tardiness, the looks of his Emma smote him worse as she presently came in, flushed, weary and impatient.

If there be anything that can effectually destroy the pleasure of one's dinner, it is this—the feeling that those who should enjoy it with you have made themselves martyrs in getting it ready. If I were a man, I would rather sit down daily to a cold collation, which, I suppose, is the modern phrase for Solomon's dinner of herbs.

Mrs. Younghusband did not look in the least like the fairy form that her husband had mentally arrayed in silk attire, bedecked with jewels and with gems, seated on an elegant chair, cushioned with satin, and placed on a costly carpet.

Somehow he did not quite understand where or on what subject to begin to talk, and his faint essays were not met pleasantly. Emma was monosyllabic. He asked if she were well, and she resented the inquiry. The truth was that she was nursing her wrath, and saving her words till he should make some allusion to the dinner. But he was too wise for that.

An experienced and very wise woman was Mr. Younghusband's sister. She was in the daily habit of "dropping in," and came to day, just as the couple were finishing their not very satisfactory dinner.

The dessert was even worse and more spoiled than the dinner; and Mr. Lovell Younghusband, dissatisfied with his meal and more disappointed in his wife, was, as you may be sure, in no very agreeable humour.

The contrast between his happy dreams as he walked home and the welcome he received was so great, the happiness he hoped to find and intended to increase was so completely defeated that he would have been actually angry, if he had dared to be.

"What, Emma! not ready! And so late at dinner!" said the visitor. "Why, you are quite behind time."

"Lovell was so tardy," said Mrs. Younghusband, with the faintest tone of reproach in her voice, as if she spoke "more in sorrow than in anger."

"Never mind, sister, we will go out and leave him at home alone, as a punishment. He shall not go with us!"

"I appeal!" said the delinquent.

"And she, foolish thing, will reverse my decision, I suppose. I see it in her eyes. Away with you, Emma, and get ready. And now, brother of mine," she continued, as Emma left the room, "I see a cloud, as yet not bigger than a man's hand. But it will come down on you presently in a steady rain, and last, like the marriage promise, which you two will daily break, so long as you both shall live."

"What do you mean? And what have I done?"

"And what has Emma been saying to you?"

"I mean to put you right," said the sister. "You have not done, and that is the difficulty. And Emma has said nothing to me respecting you but what is very kind, very foolish, and ten times as good as you deserve!"

"Oh, you women are all riddles," said Lovell, impatiently, "capricious, difficult, and hard to understand, you are all alike troublesome."

"Hoity, toity! Pretty words these for a man in the honey-moon! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, and I shall try to make you so!"

"Why, when I came in—"

"Not a word of explanation. I have heard nothing from your wife, and I wish to hear nothing from you. I know you of old for a good-natured, careless, unpunctual, affectionate, good-for-nothing brother. And I am sure that marriage has not mended you in any particular."

Lovell smiled, provoked as he had been, for his moody humour began to melt. His sister proceeded with her admonitions.

"The whole house is full of the odour of a burned and spoiled dinner, the very incense of the goddess of Discord. And it is all your fault. You came day-dreaming, all the way home, stopping to talk to Richard, Thomas, and Henry. No doubt you were thinking of your wife all the time, for it is a fashion that young married men have. You were counting on her pleased welcome, and expecting that she would rush into your arms—"

"Nonsense!"

"I know it is nonsense. But it is your nonsense, and not mine, and you cannot deny it. And while you have been dawdling away your time she has been drilling her cook and urging her servants to punctuality, to have them turn upon her only for your misdeeds, and perhaps leave her in a passion. Everything was ready to a moment, I know, for Emma is a capital manager. If you had come in at a proper time you would have found a dinner fit for a prince. And you do love a good dinner, you know."

"But—"

"Don't interrupt me. I feel voluble, and I will have my say out. You had much better hear it from me than from your wife. She will wait and make herself wretched and you too."

"Now, sister, I won't hear my wife abused in her absence."

"Fiddlesticks! She is a woman, and so am I. We women can endure a great deal. We can survive neglect of ourselves, but we cannot endure neglect of the dinners which have cost us a great deal of thought and trouble, whatever you may think of such trifles."

Mr. Younghusband, having in his earlier years had some experience of the tongue of his clever relative, leaned back in his chair and listened with an air of subdued patience.

She proceeded:

"The house is our kingdom, and we cannot endure disloyalty against domestic management, for the house and its appointments involve an immense amount of care and anxiety of which you men know nothing. It is you who have abused your wife, and not I; and she will turn on you presently, you may take my word for it, if you do not mend your ways. I know, for I have been maid, wife, and widow. I have been plagued with brothers and harassed with a husband, and I have a grown-up son at home who is now beginning to take upon him a man's airs of impertinent negligence."

"I pity him," said Lovell, laughing.

"You had a great deal better pity me; but you are like all men and side with your sex—you lords of creation! Pretty lords you would be if in our silent, toilsome, unthankful way we did not waste our lives and strength in keeping up your majesty."

"Have you done?"

"Not quite. Item after item in her bill of fare Emma saw spoiled past hope and beyond retrieval while you were amusing yourself and loitering as if a dinner could not be spoiled and a wife's patience worn out by delay. And to crown her vexation she had an appointment with me—you need not smile, ladies have engagements as well as men, and they keep them too, when their husbands will let them. That arrangement your dilatoriness has spoiled too—unless she is the best-tempered creature in the world, and I believe she is. It is not everybody who can become placid enough for pleasure after such an annoyance. If I had been in her place I would have gone out and left you to enjoy your spoiled dinner alone!"

Just then Emma came in, looking as bright and beautiful as if nothing had occurred to discompose her.

Mr. Younghusband profited by the lecture which his sister gave him, and has nearly reformed from his habits of negligence. It is curious to observe how some men, prompt to an hour in business matters, are always behind time at their breakfasts and always late to dinner. As if women, in the course of their lives, did not value punctuality, and as if their protests were not as much to be dreaded as a notary's.

The good lady who had so well advised the husband took an early occasion to report her lecture to the wife, and to quietly intersperse it also with good advice. Men certainly like to be cheerfully received, and one laughing word of good-natured remonstrance will be more efficient than three days of dignified and silent indignation.

E. L.



[HAROLD'S INTRODUCTION TO MRS. LUMLEY.]

HAROLD'S IDEAL.

His name was Harold Moore. I am sure that is a pretty name; but he was not a handsome man—indeed, he had a very ugly nose. I think he must have broken it at some time; but one man can't have all the graces, of course, else what would become of the rest of the world?

He was somewhere about thirty-five, and though thirty-five does not make a Methuselah of a person, it is not twenty-one—oh, no! not by a great deal.

Everybody said he ought to have married a long while before, and he could not contradict them. He had heard such things said of all bachelors ever since he could remember, and took them for granted, as everybody does, without arguing the matter to see whence the "ought" comes.

There are a certain set of platitudes which have been repeated ever since Noah was a young man, that nobody ever thinks of gainsaying, and I suppose they will be repeated until the end of time.

Now you needn't all fly out at me at once. I have made my statement, and I won't argue. Let us return to Harold and his particular case.

Why had he not married? He hardly knew himself. He had seen women enough whom he might have loved; and doubtless there were those among them who could have loved him, and would have married him—but he never asked any of them.

He looked back now, and thought it a little odd that the grand emotion had never come across him. Of course he had had fancies and likings, but there was nothing real in them; and he had known it all the time—that had destroyed a little of the poetry, though they had been pleasant enough.

He looked back now with a sort of bitterness easy to understand. He felt that he had been defrauded

of a portion of his youth; he had lost the wonderful sensation which makes a landmark in most lives.

Now he wished, with all his heart, he had loved somebody—even the memory of a great suffering, once lived through, would have been satisfactory.

*'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.*

So Tennyson sings, and Harold repeated the lines to himself, and thought:

"I suppose he is right. 'Loved and lost,' that sounds very romantic; I wonder how it feels."

Then he took his pipe and smoked over the idea exactly as I am doing now; as Tennyson did himself, I daresay, and thought that, at all events, he had written some very pretty verses, whether they were sound logic or not.

The more he thought about it—Harold I mean, not Tennyson—the greater pity he thought it, and grew quite indignant with his destiny, which had never shown him the path into the magic land.

While he was smoking and reproaching fate there came a letter, which offered him material for a very pretty dream. He was given to building castles in the air, and this one was gorgeous enough, with rainbows about every turret.

It was a letter from India—that of itself would have been sufficient, for a letter from that country always gives anybody a thrill. I mean anybody foolish enough to indulge in fancies reminding one of sandal-wood, delightful perfumes, sunshine and diamonds, and all sorts of fairy accompaniments.

This India letter was from an old, old friend, who had gone out, when almost a boy, to join his brother-in-law in acquiring an enlarged liver and a great fortune.

He and Harold had been fond of each other, and had kept up a correspondence to bridge the gap of time and separation, and now this missive came.

The brother-in-law had been dead several years,

and his widow, with her daughter, was returning to her native land. Mr. Fleming himself could not accompany them; but the widow's health demanded a speedy change, and come she must.

For the sake of the old time, and its friendship, would Harold undertake the charge of them; place them in a home, and, until Mr. Fleming could follow, be a brother to his widowed sister, and a sort of guardian to the young girl?

Ah! that was the interesting point in the letter—a young girl of sixteen, evidently the chief jewel in her uncle's mass of wealth.

Of his sister he only wrote that she was in delicate health—a dear, helpless, though never troublesome little creature; but this girl—Mr. Fleming was full of thought for her and her future.

She was so much older than her age in certain ways that he hardly liked the idea of confining her in a school, she was so handsome, and so full of life.

Would Harold be kind to them, and find them a house in the country for the summer, as it would be late in the spring when they came, and he wanted everything settled before they arrived?

Would he? Harold really felt grateful to his old friend for his request. How it would have been if there had been mention only of the "widowed sister." I am not prepared to say; but, as it was, he went about the fulfilment of his commission with a zest that he had not put even into amusement for a long time.

Easily arranged too the matter was. It happened that Cloverfield was to let, with the house already furnished—one of the prettiest of spots; the next residence to Harold's own—quite a fate, certainly.

So Harold walked with a light step to the agent's office; and, as Mr. Fleming had distinctly said money was no object either to the widow or himself, he was not long in having everything arranged.

It was late in May when he received another letter; the travellers were far on their way—Mr. Fleming accompanying them on account of business. They had been spending some weeks where they then were, and would sail in the next steamer.

During all those weeks I do not hesitate to acknowledge that Harold Moore had gone on dreaming in the most absurd fashion; but it was so pleasant and so natural that I can't be ill-natured about it.

It did seem to him that this was a premonition; the change was coming just when he had begun to lose all hope.

So, about a week before the vessel was due, Harold took the train into the country, so beautiful in its early summer luxuriance of leaf and blossom, to be certain that everything was in order in the new home to which the strangers were to come.

His old housekeeper had taken the carrying out of details upon herself; and when Harold went over the dwelling he was pleased to find that she had added new laurels to her reputation by her cleverness in all its arrangements.

Everything in-doors was perfect—servants already engaged. Mr. Fleming had written that Mrs. Lumley was accompanied by the man and woman who had attended to her house ever since she had one.

The grounds were looking their prettiest; the lawn, with its thickets of lilacs, was a perfect Paradise for birds; and altogether Harold thought that the woman who could not be happy there must be more impatient than Eve herself.

He went back to his own house, and though it was on a larger scale than Cloverfield, he thought it looked lonely and desolate. Somehow he could not brighten it, as he had done the other dwelling, with visions of a graceful girl flitting about among the shadows, and making sunshine wherever she moved.

Now he must return to town and wait until the steamer arrived, so that he might greet the strangers on their landing, and keep them from experiencing any of the homeless, Wandering Jew feelings which the best-regulated people are likely to endure on such occasions.

But the old proverb, "*L'homme propose, Dieu dispose*," &c., was as applicable to Harold Moore as to other men; and so he found it just now, to his extreme annoyance and disgust.

Only the night before he was going back to town a stupid horse must needs stumble with him, and he was fortunate to come off with only a sprained ankle. He fumed, of course; but there was nothing to be done but to be quiet for a week, at least, and in the meantime the steamer would arrive.

He was obliged to send and have a substitute in readiness, with a letter from himself for Mrs. Lumley, explaining his absence, and apologising for the liberty he had taken in spraining his ankle.

Oh! the visions of a young face, brightening into girlish beauty, made Harold very humble for once. They came—they stopped in town a day for some feminine reason which did not appear; then journeyed on, and took possession of their new house at the close of a lovely afternoon, which would have made a poet of Diogenes.

Harold was getting better; he could walk with a cane. How he anathematized that limp; why, it would make him look like a middle-aged man.

The next morning he drove to Cloverfield, and by means of his stick walked into the house with tolerable dignity.

Face to face in the hall he met a pretty girl, with great, shy eyes, who came forward in the most cordial way, exclaiming:

"I am so glad to see you—it is Mr. Moore, I know! Oh! we are so much obliged to you. Please to go into the sitting-room, I want to call mamma to thank you."

She was gone before Harold could do more than make a beginning of several sentences; and he took his way as she directed.

As he entered the room he saw another pretty picture—a lady in the whitest and freshest of morning-dresses, leaning back in a crimson chair, so intent on a book that she did not hear his step.

Who could she be? Some visitor they had brought. Harold thought he had never seen a face that was so lovely, with its broad forehead crowned with plaits of golden hair, and a complexion which a child might have envied, only a little too pale for perfect health.

He was looking at her intently, when she turned and arose without even a trace of surprise—it is a way some women have, and a very graceful thing it is.

"I beg your pardon," said Harold; "I am waiting for Mrs. Lumley."

"I am Mrs. Lumley," said she. "How do you do, Mr. Moore?"

She held out her hand, and her face dimpled with the sweetest smiles of welcome.

Harold stared, with surprise; he had taken it for granted she was an elderly woman, and here was a creature with no more sign of having passed her first youth than the girl he had met in the hall, only it was the face of a woman who had thought and felt, and the other was that of one yet to be awakened and developed.

He did manage to speak, to say all that was proper; but there was a buzzing in his ears all the while.

"I don't know how to thank you," Mrs. Lumley said, after she had made him sit down, asked about his accident, and smiled on him till he was dazzled.

"I beg you not to try," he answered.

"Words are such poor things," she said. "I do so hope you will always be the same to us. I seem to know you well, my brother has talked of you so much."

So they began conversing about old times, and how it happened they had never met; and more than once Harold had to bite his lips to keep back the words, "I expected to see an old woman—are you sure you are Mrs. Lumley?"

But he didn't say it, and he had no idea there was any surprise in his face; all the while the widow read him as easily as a book, and was greatly delighted.

"I must send for my daughter," she said; "she wants to thank you, and to make acquaintance with you."

"I met your—Miss Lumley, in the hall," replied Harold, it seemed too ridiculous to say, "your daughter." "She thought you were upstairs, and went to look for you."

"And here she comes," continued the lady. "Emily, Mr. Moore tells me you and he have already made acquaintance."

"Yes," returned the tall girl—and she came and sat down on the sofa beside her mother, nursing a kitten as coolly as if she had only been three feet high.

"Really," said Mrs. Lumley, with her gay laugh, "you are doing the infantile this morning."

"I can't help it," returned she, laughing too; "I am so tired of being a young lady. Isn't it a shame, Mr. Moore, to be so tall?"

"Emily," expostulated Mrs. Lumley, "remember, Mr. Moore is a stranger to your odd ways. We have thought about you so much we can't feel that you really are one," she added.

"I hope not," he answered.

"Of course not," said Miss Lumley, decidedly. "Dear me, Mr. Moore, I used to read bits out of your letters ages and ages ago. That's the way uncle taught me to read writing."

"Ages and ages ago!"

Harold felt like a moss-grown mausoleum.

The widow laughed in the most delightfully malicious way.

"I think at first Mr. Moore was a little inclined to dispute my identity," said she. "I suppose that was because I wore no cap or spectacles."

"Did you ever see anybody grow so tall as I have, Mr. Moore?" said Emily.

"You know what Shakespeare says?"

Mrs. Lumley was busy arranging some flowers which Emily had flung into her lap. She remembered Benedict's speech though; but she was thinking of a letter of Mr. Moore's to her brother, that she once read.

A letter written when his thirty-fifth birthday was approaching, in which he lamented that he never had loved, and said that now, if he married, he should look for the fresh heart of a young girl. He was weary of wisdom and worldly ways—he wanted nature.

Such a pleasure it would be to see a youthful mind develop; its appreciation of the beautiful grow; and to feel that it was his work, his love that had done it. He drew a very pretty picture of a schoolmaster sort of life, which had made her laugh heartily at the time; she thought about it now, and was rather pleased.

They spent a very pleasant morning, and made rapid progress towards a more intimate acquaintance.

But all the while Harold's head was in great confusion; he was trying to recollect dates, and find out how old this golden-haired creature really was.

Then he stopped thinking about it, and listened to Emily's open and quiet remarks. He could not help noticing her mother, nevertheless, and what a pretty sight their love for each other really was.

Here was his ideal—just such a young girl. There was no denying that; still, however, he felt a sort of disappointment.

Then he felt a little indignant with Mrs. Lumley for looking only twenty-two. Just then Emily said something particularly nonsensical and childish, and his indignation for the moment was directed towards her. It did seem rather an impertinence of hers to have shot up so rapidly.

"I want to learn to ride," Emily said, suddenly.

"Can I get a horse, Mr. Moore?"

"Without any difficulty," he answered. "Will you accept my services as guide?"

"And mamma must try too," said she.

"My dear, I never should have the courage. I have grown foolishly timid and babyish, Mr. Moore."

At all events she looked very pretty talking about it! and, somehow, he thought it rather praiseworthy, in spite of all his old and well-digested opinions.

So, as I said, they spent a very pleasant morning, and took a long step towards a familiar acquaintance. Then Harold went home to think the matter over, and speculate upon all the changes that were likely to take place in his daily life.

He thought about the girlish face which had looked so brightly at him; not beautiful yet, but with such a promise in it that nothing could be pleasanter than to watch the change a few months or a new experience would bring into it.

She was a mere child in most things; but he had for years told himself that was what he wanted to find—a mind fresh and young, which he might help to develop into strength and beauty.

Then, somehow, his thoughts wandered off to the golden-haired creature whom she called by such fanciful names; even yet it seemed too ridiculous to think of her as the mother of that tall girl.

How old must she be? He absolutely hunted up a package of Mr. Fleming's letters, written in their youthful days, to see if there were mention of his sister. Here and there he found allusions to her. Ah! here was more! Why, she was only fifteen when she married and went to India. She was thirty-three now; it did not seem possible she could be over twenty-five.

Thirty-three! He had been accustomed to think that a woman at that age was no longer young. It was different with a man—nobody would think of calling him near middle age.

She could not have much strength of character—a weak, pliable thing. It must be that she thought and felt very little. Why, it was almost the face of a girl—really he felt indignant with her.

But this child—this actual revelation of his ideal—could she be made to love him, to become all that he desired?

Truly these were early days for such thoughts. Harold, after a time, himself recognized their absurdity, and went away to his books—for he was that happy man, a student.

But every now and then a face would seem to flit between him and the old Greek play, a gleam of golden hair would dazzle his eyes, or a girl's laugh make him start, the fancy was so real.

At the end of a fortnight Harold and his new neighbours were on the most friendly and intimate terms, as was natural under the circumstances.

If he did not appear every morning at the cottage with some plan of amusement Emily scolded him without hesitation, and Mrs. Lumley was very frank and kind in her pretty way.

Still she left the two a great deal together, and never hesitated when with them to pursue her own occupations without the slightest reference to them. So Harold had the field clear enough; but, somehow, his acquaintance with the girl was on different grounds from what he had expected.

She would not be treated like a woman—she would be a child; and he did not find it quite so pleasant as he had anticipated.

Still she had a certain aptitude for study—in many ways she was in advance of girls of her age.

"You must have had careful masters," he said, one day, in reference to some book with which she was familiar.

Emily laughed and called to her mother, who was entering the room.

"Do you hear that, mamma? Mr. Moore compliments my masters, and not me."

He did not pay much attention to her; he was looking at Mrs. Lumley, and thinking he never saw grace so easy and perfect.

She would have put even a more beautiful woman to disadvantage. Somehow her singular delicacy of complexion, her low, gentle voice, a nameless charm in every movement, made even Emily appear almost coarse beside her.

It was unintentional—he did her justice there. From the first he acknowledged that she loved her daughter truly. She made a companion of her in every way possible, and the affection between them was good to see.

During that first fortnight Emily had talked so much, and made nonsense so much the order of the day, that he had been inclined to believe the mother a little frivolous—of course, it must be her fault.

Yet somehow, lately, every visit gave him a new surprise in regard to her.

One evening he walked to the cottage. He had entirely recovered, to his great relief, from the effects of his accident—to make them an impromptu visit, for he had been in town during the day.

Someone was singing, and he stood in the hall to listen. It was not Emily's voice—richer and sweeter than hers, and evincing a cultivation which hers could not yet have received.

When the music ceased he went into the parlour, curious to discover the vocalist. Standing in the moonlight, he saw Mrs. Lumley seated at the harp, with Emily curled up at her feet like a Maltese dog. They saw him and both rose.

"You are a wretch to have left us," said Emily.

"But oh, did you hear mamma sing?"

"I never heard anything so beautiful!" he exclaimed, involuntarily.

"And she hardly ever will sing for anyone," continued Emily. "Oh, you don't half know her, Mr. Moore, she is a most artful creature."

"Never mind," said Mrs. Lumley.

"But I do mind," retorted Emily. "Why, Mr. Moore, you were talking about masters. I never had any but her."

"A sentence that would puzzle a grammarian," said Mrs. Lumley, laughing to hide a little confusion.

"Never mind, my meaning is clear—isn't it, Mr. Moore?"

"Perfectly," he answered, feeling as much surprised as if somebody had unexpectedly given him a shower-bath.

"She can read Greek like an old Professor with spectacles," said Emily.

"Please don't look so shocked, Mr. Moore," said the widow, laughing gaily. "I am not so wise—don't imagine me strong-minded. I took to books when I went to India—I was so much alone, and almost as much of a child as this girl."

Harold was so much astonished that he did not conceal it well.

"I thought you admired learning," cried Emily, beginning to feel angered. "You said women ought to know Greek, and all sorts of horrid things."

"So I think now," he answered.

"Then, why don't you praise mamma?" she asked, indignantly.

"These are subjects beyond praise," he asked.

"Ah, that's better! Mamma, did you hear?"

"I think we might have lights and put the Greek books on the shelf."

"Won't you sing to me first?" Harold asked.

She complied with the greatest readiness. Sang in turn whatever Emily demanded. Then they had tea and a long talk, and it was altogether delightful.

That was the first evening Harold really heard

her converse. It was very different from the girlish talk he had listened to and tried to like of late.

Emily was nestled close to her mamma, and quiet as a mouse; and, somehow, both of them began talking very freely, not at all discomposed by her being a listener.

That the ethereal-looking little woman could be anything more than a sweet, weak creature, born to be petted, had never occurred to him. Unconsciously her revelations that night enlightened his mind.

He saw how even the perfect equality on which she had lived with Emily had been the means of giving her an acquaintance with and an influence over this girl nothing else could have done.

They talked about their old Indian life, and Emily made her tell an incident that happened when she was a baby, and her mother had gone up to a bungalow in the hills to avoid the warm weather.

There had been some trouble with the natives in the neighbourhood, and one night they came to the house, knowing Mrs. Lumley was alone with her servants.

And it occurred that she had proved herself an heroine. She first laid her baby down, and turned herself into a general without loss of time.

The servants had been going to flee; but her example and words made them ashamed of themselves, and they astonished the assailants by firing on them with such vigour that the attack was relinquished.

"And mamma fired a pistol at a man," said Emily. "He was trying to get into the room where I was."

"Oh, that was dreadful!" said she, with a shudder.

"But wasn't it brave?" cried Emily. "Then, when it was all over, she fainted away. When she came to they picked up the wounded man, and she nursed him till he got well."

"He made us a faithful servant afterwards," said Mrs. Lumley. "But don't let us talk any more of those old things! How far off that life seems—how very far off."

Harold caught the dreamy tone, caused by the memory of old weariness and pain. He would have given worlds to have known all the secrets of those past years.

That night was a new era in Harold's acquaintance with Mrs. Lumley; and, after that, each day showed him some new grace or perfection.

She treated him with the greatest familiarity and kindness; but there was not a shadow of coquetry in her manner.

She evidently told the truth when she said that, except where Emily's future was concerned, she had grown accustomed to think her life at an end where change or incident were concerned.

These words haunted Harold; they annoyed him too, because they were evidently heartfelt.

Very pleasantly the days glided by, and the summer was passing before anyone was conscious of it.

Harold Moore's ideal had faded so completely away that he doubted if you could have made him believe he had ever set it up as a model; the reality of which he must find in order to brighten life out of its staleness.

He and Emily were the best possible friends; but he had grown to consider her a mere child, and she was quite happy in being so treated.

"I like you so much better than I expected," said she, one day, with her usual frankness. "I thought at first you were going to keep me on my grown-up behaviour all the while—but you soon left that off."

"She is a singular compound of child and woman," Harold said to Mrs. Lumley as she left the room.

"I haven't wished her to grow old too fast," she answered. "I never had any girlhood; I was determined she should not be deprived of hers."

He could not exactly ask what she meant; indeed, in certain ways, he understood from his own experience. So few people do have a real season of boyhood or girlhood.

It is a pitiful thing to see fifteen, with a sort of knowledge of life and books which only later years should give; and yet it is the grand fault of the education of our age.

Of somewhat similar subjects they talked; and then they wandered off to other things, and were rather losing their depth in some metaphysical train of thought, when Emily looked in at the door.

She went down to gather fresh flowers for the vases, and they sat down on the veranda watching the white clouds sail slowly overhead, the edges tipped with golden light, and a quiet reigned over everything around.

"He hath made all things beautiful in their season," Mrs. Lumley said, suddenly.

She was unconscious that she had spoken aloud till she saw him looking at her.

"I think it so often," she continued, "as life grows

more quiet and I grow more patient—that all will come right at last."

He understood her, and could follow her train of thought—thought which only comes after life has lost a portion of its fever, and the mists of self, clearing from before our eyes, enable us to believe and to know that all will, indeed, come right at last.

But Emily hurried back with her flowers.

"I have one regret in life," said she.

"And that?" they asked.

"That I couldn't have been a boy long enough to climb a tree just once. Such plums as there are out here!"

They all laughed heartily; but Harold did wonder if any man could ever prefer the crudeness of early youth to the matured perfections of womanhood, such as he saw portrayed beside him.

It was approaching winter; the pleasant home would soon have to be given up.

Mrs. Lumley was going to town that Emily might have the benefit of masters, and advantages concomitant.

They were walking up and down the lawn in the sunset—Mrs. Lumley and Harold—talking of the pleasant weeks, and dreading to have a change, as people do when they have learned to rest on any gleam of sunshine which offers grateful for peace.

"I dread going," Harold said, suddenly. "It will all be so different."

"You will find us the same," she answered, with her old candour.

Suddenly the words that had of late been so often on his lips rushed up; he told her what she had grown to him—how he loved her.

It was all settled there and then; and when they went into the house Emily only needed a word to catch the truth.

"It's exactly as it ought to be," said she. "Thank goodness! Mr. Moore will keep me a child for ever, for fear somebody should think mamma was growing old."

So Harold found his ideal, and was content.

F. L. B.

NATHALIE LERMOND.

CHAPTER V.

THEY passed on down the path. Nathalie alone lingered. Long, widening belts of shadow lay along the velvet-green turf. The cool water gurgled and splashed musically. Some wild flowers growing near its brink still held the early morning dew undried in their half-folded petals.

Miss Lermond stood leaning against the arch, hearing the receding steps and voices, yet reluctant to go.

She had her unaccountable moods—this dark-eyed heiress of Hendee Hall, as all young persons of her sex are apt to have.

Remembering the dark tragedy of which he was the hero, remembering too that first dreadful night in the room of the dead enchantress, she was not likely to feel at ease in Mr. St. Maur's presence. There are some natures that, like the mimosa, feel instinctively the coming evil, even when afar off.

Presently, a rustle of the shrubbery close by startled Nathalie from her reverie. Something bounded out from it—a tall, shining grayhound, who paused and looked at her with mild, inquiring eyes. Instantly, a shadow fell across the water. She raised her head, and saw on the other side of the spring a gentleman, standing with an artist's sketch-book in his hand, gravely regarding her. It was John Calvert.

Who shall say by what subtle sign they knew each other?

There was little of surprise in either face, apart from that of so abrupt a meeting. Nathalie, like an Undine, at the water's brink, with the strong sunlight upon her, looked at him with large eyes, that, in looking, cleared slowly from all the clouds and forgetfulness of ten long years.

The same, but not the same! Older, wiser, stronger; yes, but with the calm eyes that she remembered so well, and the same grave, powerful face. He made one step forward, lifting his hat.

"I regret that Miss Lermond should find me trespassing. I thought myself still within the bounds of a neighbouring estate. Pardon me."

So he knew her—the pretty child of ten years before merged into this magnificent woman. A tenacious memory had John Calvert.

"It is no trespass," replied Nathalie, just as composed as himself.

"Thank you," said Mr. Calvert. "Dare I remind you, Miss Lermond, that we were once friends?"

"I do not need to be reminded, Mr. Calvert—we are friends, I trust, still."

Could anything be more gracious? They stood

face to face one moment, she the gay, beautiful belle, he the strong man of the world.

Who can tell how many thoughts, how many memories were crowded into that one moment? Verily they had both changed!

"I hardly anticipated this meeting," he said, at last, "although I learned at the Fields that you had come to Hendee. Time works many wonders."

She smiled, standing before him in the sunshine—blinding him for the moment to its brilliancy.

"Yes," she said, with a little gesture, "it has made me old, tired, and weary."

Such a look as he gave her, saying:

"At twenty-one?"

"Yes."

It was his turn to smile, though in a troubled way.

"That is early indeed to lose the dew and the bloom. You will find them renewed here, mayhap. Do you like this old home of the Hendees?"

"Not as well as I had hoped to," she said, quietly. He went up to her.

"Miss Lermond," he said, "every life has its hours of crisis and peril. Yours will be no exception. I have no time to explain, but"—slowly she felt her hand taken into his own—"I wish I dared ask you to trust me," he said.

She drew away, silent, amazed.

Pardon my abruptness. I cannot say more.

Yonder comes Mr. St. Maur—there are Miss Galbraith's signals."

Approaching rapidly—in search, of course—Mr. St. Maur's face darkened at the sight of Mr. Calvert.

"You have stolen a march upon us," he said.

"No," answered Mr. Calvert, ironically, "I lost my way."

"To fall into Miss Lermond's," added Rose Galbraith, *sotto voce*. "We have a vacant seat in the carriage."

"Ah, Nathalie, what a charming old place!" said Mrs. Delmare, coming up, very red, and very breathless.

"It lacks absolutely nothing. A ghost—beg pardon, Mr. St. Maur—a tragedy, a wishing-spring, and a—a—what did you say, Miss Hendee?"

"Prophecy," prompted golden-haired Ruby.

Nathalie raised her eyebrows.

"I do not understand."

"Ah," explained Mr. St. Maur, "the prophecy of Hendee is as old as its walls—so old, in fact, that it has degenerated at last into a nursery rhyme. Is it possible that you have never heard it?"

"Never," said Miss Lermond.

Mr. Calvert looked at both.

"Pray what may it be?" cried Rose Galbraith.

"Miss Lermond is anxious to know, I am sure."

Ruby gave her a warning glance.

"Where ignorance is bliss, &c.," she said, in a whisper.

"As I remember," said Mr. St. Maur, leaning careless and handsome against the arch, with his dark eyes fixed on the waters of the spring, "it ran thus:

"When a young dove sits in the eagle's nest
And the hawk fly east and the hawk fly west,
Then blackened shall be
The pride of Hendee."

"Which interpreted," said John Calvert, "means what?"

"That is for the savans to determine. One might readily guess, however, that the prophecy is near its fulfilment."

"Since the dove has entered the eagle's nest?"

Nathalie drew a long, shivering breath.

"Alloons!" cried Rose Galbraith, taking Mr. Calvert's arm, "there is an end to everything. It really requires some philosophy, Nathalie, but abide in this grand old place of yours."

They walked slowly away. The quiet grounds were left once more to the morning sunshine and the birds. They walked slowly, I say; John Calvert's brain was busy with the unconnected links of a certain chain, Nathalie vaguely wondering if that queer rhyme had ought to do with herself; Mr. St. Maur was thinking his own thoughts, held securely in his own keeping; but of them all Ruby Hendee alone turned her golden, ringleted head, wistfully looking back at the wishing-spring, and in looking she sighed.

CHAPTER VI.

LONG chronic difficulties are often followed by revolutions.

Thus with the silence and desolation of the Hendee estates. A more thorough one than that succeeding Nathalie Lermond's arrival thereat it would be hard to imagine.

Mrs. Roberts held up her matronly hands. Memories of departed years began to throng up, quite eclipsed by this new reign, for Nathalie was luxurious in her tastes.

The old family portraits, lining the long-darkened galleries, seemed staring in dumb amazement at the sudden sunlight let in upon them, at the renovation going on throughout the old house, and, more than all, at the queenly young girl who walked the terraces, and flitted through the old rooms, superintending and directing all, and making the old place resound again with the pleasant voices of youth.

One chamber alone in the east wing remained untouched.

It was that of the ill-fated Hagar St. Maur. Never, after the night of her arrival at the Hall, had Nathalie entered it. The door was locked, the key given to Mrs. Roberts. No one was allowed access there.

The sumptuous chamber had been left silent, and sacred to the dead.

It is not to be supposed that Nathalie was suffered to remain long undisturbed in her retreat. The gay world could not afford to lose her so easily. Young beauties, with an unlimited number of thousands tacked to their silks, are always held at premium by their inevitable five hundred friends. Visitors came, fast and thick, to Hendee, foremost among whom was the gay, choice circle at the Fields! Mr. St. Maur, with his dark face and jealous eyes, always watchful; Mr. Calvert, silent and grave; Miss Galbraith, clattering her little high-heeled slippers through the tessellated hall, and vainly making eyes from behind the bars of her fan; Mrs. Delmare, who wore point-lace ruffles, and petted Ruby Hendee; and a half-score of lesser lights, well enough in their way, but with whom we have little to do.

Miss Lermond was not partial. The dowagers admired her admirable breeding. If she smiled, it was for all.

Hospitality was evenly bestowed. The belles adored her.

She did not coquet; all lovers were summarily dealt with. They who held their peace were the safest. In fact, Miss Lermond had established her court, and bravely she queened it over them all.

It was a golden afternoon in September, flushed with prophetic tints of deepening autumn. The wind blew from the south, strong and sweet. A soft haze hung upon the sea, all dotted with white-winged ships along its dim purple horizon; and the ebbing tide had left bare whole lines of rocks, slippery with seaweed, and shallow salt pools, and reaches of gray sand, that in the western sun shone like silver ribbons, belting the dark and wind-tossed sea.

Out in the offing lay Mr. St. Maur's yacht at anchor, its blue pennon fluttering lazily in the wind, and on its prow the word "Nathalie" painted in fresh gilt letters.

Mr. John Calvert, lying full length upon the rocks, with sketch-book and pencils flung down beside him, himself a picture if he had but known it, watched the tide beginning to return up the shore, and the distant glitter of that name, as the sun, slanting slowly behind the silver poplars, struck it in descending with a thousand flashes of rainbow light.

"A charming yacht!" said the mocking voice of Rose Galbraith.

She stood on the rocks by his side, a pretty lazy brunette vision, shading her bright face with a pretty little parasol, and eyeing him askant from under her languid lashes.

Mr. Calvert arose, saying:

"It is, indeed."

"And a charming name."

"Yes."

"I admire Mr. St. Maur's taste. One might call it significant, eh?"

"Pardon me," said Mr. Calvert, "I was never an adept at reading riddles."

"Oh, but it is your profession," she said, maliciously.

He shrugged his broad shoulders.

"Miss Galbraith is *au fait* in matters of the heart. I am not."

She laughed, turning over the leaves of his sketch-book with her delicate white hands.

"I forgive you. Look, Miss Lermond's wherry, and—a subject for your pencil."

It was just grating against the sand—the wherry—a pretty, green-and-white one. The subject in question was Nathalie herself, standing in the bow, her dark boating-dress looped up over a skirt of scarlet, and a heron plume, tipped with the same vivid hue, flashing in the cap that shaded her magnificent hair.

Mr. St. Maur, who was first to leap ashore, turned with an indescribably tender look on his dark face, and held out to her his hand. Straightway the rocks swarmed.

"Idlers," said a voice just at Mr. Calvert's shoulder. "It is sweet doing nothing."

She stood leaning against the rocks, a bright flower in her hand, her cheek flushed, her brown eyes shining like two stars. Rose Galbraith held up to

her one of Mr. Calvert's sketches, done in water colours.

"Could anything be more exquisite? You have mistaken your calling, Mr. Calvert; you should have been an artist."

It was the head of a child, standing at a narrow, barred window—a most exquisite thing, as Rose Galbraith had said.

Nathalie's eyes dilated slowly. How well she remembered it—the dark, heavy casement which looked into the old jail-yard, and that face, transfigured by his touch indeed, but still her own; its careless brown hair flung back half braided upon the low, child-brow, the large eyes uplifted, brown, wistful, and innocent, the sweet, rosebud mouth—all turned towards the blue sky and the sunshine, with the look of an angel shut, somehow, out of heaven. Nathalie's cheek crimsoned.

"Is it a fancy sketch?" asked Mr. St. Maur, quickly.

"No," said John Calvert.

"Whoever could have been so pretty?" cried Ruby Hendee, peeping over Cousin Gilbert's—for she had learned to call him that—tall shoulder. "And how familiar it seems! Ah, Nathalie, it is like you."

"Thank you," said Nathalie.

Mr. St. Maur's face darkened.

"It is!" cried Felix Carleton. "By Jove! what a face! and, by the way, apropos to that, do you happen to know, Mr. St. Maur, if there be a place in this vicinity known as Coltonleigh?"

A streak of red shot across Mr. St. Maur's face. He turned sharply to the interrogator.

"There is such a place, I believe, some ten miles distant. What now?"

"Oh, nothing," answered Mr. Carleton, poking crabs with Ruby's parasol, "only, you see, a woman down here on the beach—she said she came from Coltonleigh—was asking me particularly for you a few moments ago."

John Calvert lifted his eyes and fixed them on his host and friend of the Fields. Under that look Mr. St. Maur would have held his self-possession had he been suffering the greatest torments.

"A woman! ah?"

"Softly," said Mr. Carleton, with a grimace, "a very ugly one, and not over young. She hinted at important business with you, &c.; but as I was strongly reminded of one of Macbeth's witches, I sent her to wait for you at the Fields."

"Oh—ah!" muttered Mr. St. Maur, showing his teeth, "did you ask her name?"

"Not I."

"Nor business?"

"Never a word. She didn't interest me."

He began to rally.

"Mr. Calvert," he said, gaily, "you are in luck. I must resign the ladies to your care for a time."

"Where are you going?" Mr. Calvert said, carelessly.

"To the Fields. I will return in time to ride with you home."

"How very odd!" murmured Rose Galbraith.

Nathalie looked surprised.

"Forgive me!" he said, in a low, hurried tone. "I must go! Do not ask me why. I will explain on my return."

He ran down from the rocks, waiting for no reply.

"Whew!" whistled Mr. Carleton. "What is all this about?"

A sound of horse's hoofs on the hard beach road arose, and they knew he was gone. The incident, simple enough in itself, had a somewhat general effect, since everyone after it grew silent and uncomfortable. A sense of mystery is never pleasant, and Mr. St. Maur, to say the least, was very uncommunicative.

They drove home up the beach road, in the last light of the descending sun. Mr. Calvert drove Miss Galbraith and Ruby.

"Pon my word!" cried Felix Carleton, lost in admiration, "how that fellow can handle the ribbons! See there, now! He's a stunner, is Mr. Calvert! Why don't you keep him here till after the ball?"

"Keep him?" echoed Nathalie; "is he going away?"

"Back to town. He's been winning a suit for Mr. St. Maur."

"Indeed!"

"Ask him to stay to the ball, will you?" coaxed the young cadet, with an eager, boyish face.

"I want him to go partridge-shooting with me—he's a splendid shot."

Nathalie laughed.

That night, when John Calvert came to make his adieux, she, sitting in the oriel window, beckoned him to her side. With graceful humility he placed an ottoman at her feet.

"Will you not dance at my birth-night ball?" she said.

"I never dance," answered Mr. Calvert.

"Then you can look on," said Miss Galbraith, with a shrug.

"Since Miss Lermond commands me—"

"You will come?"

"I will come."

As they were entering the carriages Mr. St. Maur rode up. His horse's flanks were white with foam. He had come to escort the ladies to the Fields.

"Well?" said Felix Carleton, carelessly, tapping his shoulder in passing, "did you find the fair unknown awaiting you, as I said?"

Mr. St. Maur wheeled quickly.

"Oh, yes, it was what I supposed—a mere charity affair. Her husband was a pilot lost last year—the old story—destitution. Miss Galbraith, you ride with the Delmares?"

Long after the house was still that night Nathalie, in her own room, sat looking out on a bright harvest moon, struggling amidst dark and stormy clouds, and thinking, with nervous dread, of the haggard face Mr. St. Maur wore, and the passionate, eager look he had given her as he lingered to say good-night.

She leaned her white forehead against the pane, and while gazing steadily out, somehow betwixt those thoughts and herself rose up John Calvert's face, grave, watchful, and silent, just as she had seen it but an hour before—that strong face, which one, in trusting one, might trust for ever.

A lamp burned on the mantelpiece.

The pretty boudoir was full of its warm, mellow light, and the door opening upon the upper gallery stood ajar.

Ruby passed by, and peered in for a moment with her golden curls clustering about her flushed face, and said good-night, gaily.

Nathalie fell back on her seat, her eyes again resting upon that ring of silver in the dark, purple southwest, and her thoughts upon Mr. St. Maur.

It was strange how thoroughly she disliked the man.

Why did he come so often to the Hall? Yet it was but natural, of course—it had once been his home, and Mrs. Roberts liked him, and talked of a great reformation which had taken place in his habits and character since the old days, and Ruby too—

A cry aroused Nathalie—a long, wild yell, that, rising up somewhere in the gallery outside, rang through every nook and corner of the old house, like the last despairing wail of a soul condemned.

Once—twice it came, shrill, fierce and terrible; then something rushed by the half-open door, closed it with a bang, and the lamp, extinguished by the draught of air, left the room in total darkness.

Nathalie sprang to the door, with an answering shriek of terror on her lips.

It yielded to her hand, and, rushing through the gallery, dark likewise, she stumbled and nearly fell over something crouching in a heap on the floor, as Mrs. Roberts, lamp in hand, appeared at the head of the staircase.

"Good heavens! Miss Lermond, what has happened?" she cried.

Miss Lermond bent down to that something at her feet and felt, as she did so, a clasp of arms flung around her convulsively.

It was Ruby Hendee.

A more pitiable picture of absolute terror it would be hard to imagine. All the pretty colour had gone from her face, leaving it ghastly pale. The pupils of her blue eyes were distended—the eyes themselves seemed ready to start from their sockets.

Livid, collapsed, shivering in mortal terror, her teeth chattering, she lay at Nathalie's feet, grasping her dress in dumb, convulsive appeal.

"Ruby! dear, dear Ruby!" cried Miss Lermond, trying to raise her, "what is it? Are you hurt? Are you ill? Mrs. Roberts, pray help me!"

Mrs. Roberts lifted Ruby up.

"Oh, my dear young lady, whatever can be the matter? What could make you shriek out like that? Goodness gracious me! here's all the servants gaping!"

"Did you see it?" gasped Ruby, shuddering as she hid her face on Nathalie's shoulder.

"See what? There is nothing here—I have seen nothing."

"Oh," cried Ruby, in a broken, sobbing voice, "it was she—it was indeed, standing just where you stand now; and when she turned and looked at me she gave that dreadful cry."

"Who? What are you talking of, Ruby?"

"She—Hagar St. Maur—that dead, murdered woman! Nathalie, Nathalie, it will haunt me till my dying day!" she said, with a wail.

"Send the servants away, Mrs. Roberts," said Miss Lermond, growing white around the lips.

Mrs. Roberts obeyed.

"Ruby, darling, are you quite sure of what you say? Try to think. Do you mean you have met a person here?"

Ruby looked around with large, dilated eyes. "She came from that room!" she said, pointing to the door of the black and gold chamber, which opened at the farther end of the gallery. "As heaven hears me, Nathalie, I saw it—the same you saw weeks ago."

"Heaven be good to us!" cried Mrs. Roberts, wringing her hands.

"She was dressed in some trailing gray stuff," Ruby went on, in a voice that admitted of no doubt, "and her hair hung to her knees—that golden hair! When she saw me she flung up her arms, and fled along the gallery, whither I did not see; but oh, how shall I ever forget that look—those terrible eyes?"

"Mrs. Roberts," spoke Nathalie, "will you try the door of that chamber?"

The old housekeeper, with that desperation born of fear, went to the door and—flung it wide open; it was unlocked! Beyond, lay the dreaded chamber, dark, still, and tenantless.

Mrs. Roberts and Nathalie looked at each other, both a shade paler.

"Who has the key, Mrs. Roberts?"

"I have it myself!" answered Mrs. Roberts, showing it among her bunch of housekeeping keys. "I locked the chamber myself, weeks ago, and this key has never been out of my possession since, nor I have never unlocked the door."

"Was there ever another key?"

"Never but one other, Miss Lermond. That she had years ago. 'Twas lost!"

Mrs. Roberts closed and locked the door while speaking, with a trembling hand.

"Do not speak of this to the servants," said Nathalie. "I will try to unravel the mystery to-morrow. There is something very singular about it, to say the least. Ruby can share my room to-night."

Mrs. Roberts hastened down the staircase, looking curiously over her shoulder, not, however, till she had seen the young ladies safe in Nathalie's room. Some dreadful thing seemed to be hanging over the house. It had always been the home of disasters, but this unhappy wraith was worse than all else. What would Mr. St. Maur say? She hoped he would not hear of it. It would awaken such dreadful memories. If the servants dared open their mouths, she would give them warning at once.

And all the while Ruby Hendee, safe in bed, was shuddering and shaking, with the clothes drawn up over her face, and Nathalie, lying beside her, watched the shadows and the lamplight on the walls, with dark and sleepless eyes, wondering, with a thrill of dread, what earthly thing it could be which forbade poor Hagar St. Maur to rest.

CHAPTER VII.

JOHN CALVERT stayed at Miss Lermond's birth-night ball.

It was a night to be remembered in the annals of the old house—a mild, moonlight night in autumn, before the year's bright colours had given place to sober russets.

Such music, lights and flowers as there were that night! Such boned turkey and champagne, rich plate, and glittering glass, and delightful confusion everywhere! Everybody went, of course—that is, everybody who was fortunate enough to receive an invitation; the belles from curiosity, and a desire to be seen, the duennas to gossip, the fortune-hunters seeking whom they might devour, the gay young officers to flirt with the handsome girls, and make eyes, particularly at Miss Lermond. All unexceptionable people, of course.

Marie stood beside Miss Lermond's chair, putting the finishing touches to her toilet.

It was a dress of pale, creamy Persian silk that she had chosen for this, her birth-night—a trailing, magnificent dress, glistening with falls of point-lace that a duchess might have envied. Miss Lermond wore few ornaments.

There were broad bands of gold on her perfect arms, and broad bands of it embedded in the folds upon folds of satin-black hair, lending a sort of barbaric splendour to her classic beauty, but that was all.

Strange that Miss Lermond never wore the Hendee jewels.

Marie was searching for her lady's gloves. The chamber had a scent of musk and Asiatic spices. Nathalie sat looking into the mirror, not thinking of the face it reflected, till another face, mirrored beside her own, violet-eyed and golden-haired, made her start, with a low laugh.

"Ah, *ma chère*, let me look at you," said Ruby, turning her round to the light.

"Well?" smiled Nathalie.

Ruby went off in a gay waltz.

"You are perfect. How does that prophecy run—"

"When a young dove sits in the eagle's nest,

And the hawk fly east, and the hawk fly west,

"As they are flying to-night, you know,

"Then blackened shall be

"The pride of Hendee!"

"And what is going to blacken it, pray?" asked Nathalie.

"Rumour saith not. It is a riddle for all readers. Now be good enough to look at me, *ma belle*."

A very charming picture Miss Hendee made, in her ball-dress of white satin and pearls—very different from Nathalie, perhaps, but charming, nevertheless.

"I shall not turn your head with flattery thus early," said Nathalie, smiling. "You will hear enough before midnight. Now, Marie, give me my gloves, and we will go down."

"Mademoiselle forgets her bouquet."

Nathalie turned. Upon the dressing-table two bouquets were lying side by side. One, a cluster of half-open lilies, milk-white, and like stars set in a dense green shadow of waxy leaves; the other, a bunch of purple violets, tied with a golden cord.

"Who sent them, Marie?"

Marie, being a discreet handmaiden, easily bribed, did not know.

"They came from the Fields," said Ruby. "I chanced to see the messenger. Some gallantry of Felix Carleton, or those new officers."

Nathalie's white fingers hovered daintily in air a moment—then she took up the purple violets.

"Now I am ready," she said.

"The lilies are prettier," ventured Ruby.

Nathalie looked at them with a stern brow, but half smiling.

"I have a fancy. There's an asp in them, perhaps."

"Or perhaps—"

"Mr. St. Maur sent them."

Ruby blushed.

"You do not like Cousin Gilbert?"

"No!" answered Nathalie.

She swept down the broad staircase with her violets. Ruby followed more slowly, and at a more thoughtful pace.

The guests of the night were fast assembling. A queen was Nathalie that night, receiving by divine right the homage of her loyal subjects—the divine right of her beauty and youth.

Fans waved, silks rustled, the inspiring sound of the waltz music was beginning to break through all, and Miss Lermond scented her violets and looked at the door, wondering what made the party from the Fields so late.

The first who appeared was John Calvert. He made his way to her at once, towering head and shoulders over everybody around him.

"You are late," she said.

"Yes."

And his eyes, taking in her superb figure at a glance, fixed themselves at last on the purple violets with an indescribably peculiar look.

"Mr. St. Maur was detained at Coltonseigh, whither he went this morning; but he is coming, I see, to make his own explanations."

He retired with a sudden coldness of manner, as strange as it was new. Nathalie shut her teeth firmly.

What could all the man?

"Many happy returns of this night," nodded Rose Galbraith, in pink satin and diamonds.

Mr. St. Maur, on whose arm she leaned, disengaged himself and came forward. Nathalie was struck with his worn and haggard look.

"Mr. Calvert has explained, I suppose," he said, hastily, after the first formal greeting. "I was detained at Coltonseigh, and they were foolish enough to wait for me."

"What! that pilot's widow again?" said Felix Carleton, not without a touch of malice. "Pon my word, you have struck a new vein, Mr. St. Maur. One would hardly have thought it of you."

"Thought what?" he inquired, sharply.

"It's a matter of charity—isn't it?"

"Yes."

"I never knew before that you were given to such things."

Mr. St. Maur laughed.

"There are more things in earth and heaven, Horatio, than are dreamed of in your philosophy."

Miss Lermond will you honour me for this waltz?"

Felix drew Miss Lermond's hand through his arm.

"You are too late," he said.

"The next, then?" pleaded Mr. St. Maur.

She shook her head, smiling.

"Surely you are not quite monopolized?"

"Until supper."

Therefore he must be content till then. He watched the heavy Persian silk trail away—watched it with a quiet pang of jealous fear. He was not

one to play the wall-flower on such occasions. Casting about for some desirable object, he came upon Ruby Hendee, cool and fair, in a curtained recess, looking like a picture in her glitter of spotless satin and golden hair.

She started as he drew the curtains back, her fly cheek flushing like a sea-shell. Surely Ruby's good angel was fast deserting her.

"Oh, Cousin Gilbert!" she said, like a child, "I feared you would not come."

With a dark, admiring glance, he said:

"Not come!—to behold the old hall in a festival again, to quiz Miss Lermond's dear five hundred friends, and, more than all, to see you, little Ruby?"

"How can you? All homage to-night is due to Nathalie. Look! is she not beautiful?"

Yes, very, whirling past just then, in the arms of Felix Carleton. Mr. St. Maur's eyes followed her, but he laughed lightly.

"We love the violets as well as the roses—sometimes better. Have you danced?"

"Once. I grew tired, and came here to—to—"

"Wait for me?"

"I did not say that," she said, reddening.

He changed his tone. He did not care to get beyond his depth.

"Come into the music-room, *ma belle cousine*. It is too warm to dance. I want to hear you sing."

He drew her hand into his—he was master. She sat down at the open piano, and turned over some leaves of music upon it with listless white fingers. The lights of the chandelier burnt faintly. Aromatic scents of shrubs and flowers near filled the air. Through the door left ajar stole in echoes from the ball-room of music, laughter and sweet voices.

"What shall I sing?" she asked, looking timidly up at him.

His brows, knitted a moment in perplexing thought, relaxed.

"Whatever you like. I was fond of Moore—once—when a boy."

"Have you outlived the preference?"

"No; which is saying much, when I consider how many things of more importance I have outlived. Will you have more light?"

"Oh, no."

She chose the dimness instead, full of sweet, subdued sounds.

Mr. St. Maur stood at her shoulder, his arms folded, looking down at her slender figure in its white ball-dress, and thinking—of what? Of her youth and childish beauty? of her tender, womanly heart? of the indescribable pathos of her voice—a clear, powerful soprano, that lingered and lingered on the minor chords with sad, prophetic sweetness? Not he. Nevertheless, to his dying hour, he remembered both the voice and the song:

All that's bright must fade,
The brightest still the fleetest;
All that sweet was made
To be lost when sweetest.

"True!" murmured Mr. St. Maur, bitterly.

Ruby's fingers faltered on the keys. She looked up.

"I have not loved the world nor the world me," he quoted, smiling. "There is nothing strange in that, little Ruby."

He forced back her head, that he might look at her beautiful drooping face.

"Were you never happy, Cousin Gilbert?" she said.

"Never more than at present," said he, still smiling.

"I am in earnest."

"And I."

A faint flush crossed her cheek.

"Happiness does not come to us for the asking. It is but a phantom at best. You should have been my guardian angel long ago, Ruby. I might have been a better man—who knows?"

Her head had drooped forward, its golden curls partly shading her face. She put away the hand still resting on them, with a quick gesture, but not before a tear, large and glistening, had fallen down in the dreamy light, on the smooth satin of her dress.

"Ruby!"

An amazed, questioning look. Her face crimsoned hotly under his look—then grew pale. What he read there was as plain as plain could be. He bit his lip.

"My dear child, what are you crying for?"

Ruby rose hastily.

"I—I do not know—it is such a sad song."

"Thank you very much for it. Will you sing any more?"

"Oh, no!" said she, quickly; "let us go back to the ball-room. I believe—that is, I am to dance with Mr. Carleton."

He gave her his arm, not once looking at her. Mr. Carleton met them at the door, in search of Miss Hendee.

He was cruel to the core, was this man, else had he never met the eyes she raised to his there, with such a cool, careless, un pitying face.

"As remore. The room is very warm—do not dance too much, little Ruby."

He dropped her trembling hand with a thrill of relief. He was bored. The pretty, blue-eyed child! What folly had she got into that golden head of hers?

He went on across the ball-room, the whole matter forgotten in a moment. A very small matter indeed to him—what it was to her he neither knew nor cared. Why should he?

Forgotten in a moment, because, in threading the crowd, he had come upon a sofa, in the crimson curve of which someone was sitting, languid and indolent, one white arm, clasped with gold, lying idly upon the velvet, and borrowing from it a rosy flush, and a scent of sandal odours about her, exhaling even from her dark hair. Something, sharp and bright as lightning, leaped into Mr. St. Maur's eyes. He paused.

"When do you return to town?" she was saying, quietly.

"To-morrow," answered John Calvert, who stood at the side of the sofa.

She toyed with the purple violets lying on her lap. "Shall you ever come back?"

"I hope I may."

Rose Galbraith looked up from a table near by, where she sat turning over a portfolio of drawings, scribbled in pencil along their margins.

"Mr. Calvert, do you ever cross a T?"

"Barely."

"Or dot an I?"

"Very rarely indeed."

"This sketch of Drachenfel's is charming; come and show it to Nathalie."

He brought the drawing.

Nathalie leaned forward to take it, and her bouquet slipped to the floor. He picked it up, and that peculiar look which she had noticed before passed across his face. Mr. St. Maur, watching them, saw it too.

"Sweets to the sweet," said Rose Galbraith, wickedly. "Pray how did you discover Miss Lermond's penchant for violets?"

"I?" said John Calvert.

She laughed and said:

"Pardon me. It was a bird in the air that whispered it."

"I do not understand you," he answered.

She nodded her gay little head.

"I will not betray you. Ah, Mademoiselle Nathalie, do not look so grave; it is no Bluebeard secret."

"None, indeed," said Mr. Calvert, smiling quietly.

"I did not discover the *penchant*, Miss Galbraith—I mistook it."

A dark doubt crossed Nathalie's mind. As he placed the bouquet in her hand she recoiled from its fragrance, sickened and bewildered. It was Mr. St. Maur's gift, then.

"Mr. Calvert, were those lilies yours?" asked she, under her breath.

"I am afraid they were."

"I left them withering more than an hour ago."

He smiled. "Poor lilies!"

"What are you talking about?" said Rose Galbraith.

"Another secret," answered Mr. Calvert, his face radiant.

Shortly after, Mr. St. Maur, in passing the sofa, found near it a cluster of violets, half crushed, into the tufted floor by the feet of the dancers. Faintly odorous still, but dead. He bent down with an unchanging face, gathered up a few shattered petals, and laid them in his vest. Then he went on.

Great was the rush to the supper-room, where, to the sound of delicious music from the band, glasses clattered, and light voices rose up, and boned turkey, jellies, oyster *pâtés* and champagne disappeared like the things of a dream.

Mrs. Delmare, looking around her with discriminating eyes, on a sea of flowers, lights, jewels, and beautiful faces, inwardly estimated the cost of the affair, and wished Miss Lermond many returns of the day, for her friends' sake, as well as her own.

Far up the length of the room stood Nathalie, the bright, particular star, on whom all eyes were centred, with a score of gallant young officers, radiant in brass buttons, contending for her smiles.

Mr. St. Maur, at a little distance, watched her, his thin red lips just curling to some sallies of Rose Galbraith's, his thoughts very far removed from that birth-night fête.

And little Ruby Hendee, under John Calvert's protecting wing, shrank back among the gayer exotics, pale and silent, longing for the feast to be over, for the crowd to go, for some refuge from the eyes that were upon her. There was an ache at her heart

under those glaring lamps that would not be danced away.

They fell back at last. The band struck up a waltz—a soft, sinuous Spanish waltz, breathing of sighing palms, moonlight, and fountains. The ball-room surged in a human sea again, and Nathalie, playing the spectator for a moment on its threshold, heard a quick step at her side.

"Come," said Mr. St. Maur, drawing her hand through his arm.

She recoiled.

"I do not wait."

"But to music like this!"

He drew her, reluctant, yet resistless, into the circle of dancers. There was no retreat then. His arm passed around her; pleading and passionate rose up the music; the lights and the thronging faces passed in giddy whirl, and Nathalie was swimming down the room, as thistledown is borne on a wind, powerless to pause.

She could feel the heavy beat of his heart against her own—hear his quick breath. Her own eyes kindled. Surely this was not music! It was something even more fervent, blended with a singular sadness, beating itself out in rhythmic pulses, as the purple seas beat out their wretchedness on cruel shores. She floated on and on, in a vague, bewildering dream, half pleasure and half pain, her head touching his shoulder, the faint perfume of her hair and of her dress circling about her, seeing yet not seeing John Calvert's grave eyes watching her, and, in the crowd beyond, one blue-eyed face with golden curls shining about it, pale and wistful as face could be.

"Nathalie! Nathalie!" she heard in her ear, like a cry.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

MOTTO FOR A TAILOR.—A tailor, having set up his carriage, asked Foote for a motto. "There is one from Hamlet," said the wit, "that will watch you to a button-hole: 'List, list! oh, list!'"

RURAL SCENE.

First Lady: "Mr. Nancy, don't you want to take a walk with Belle and me? We are going over to the spring."

Mr. Nancy: "Oh, no! You ought not to pass the Thompsons; for that dreadful poodle of theirs always runs out and barks. It is really dangerous this season. Besides, you have no cane nor parasols to frighten him off with."

Second Lady: "Oh, we'll protect you! There are two of us—and, besides, we are not afraid of puppies, or we should not be here."

AN EFFECTIVE DISCOURSE.—Old Elwes, the miser, having listened to a very eloquent discourse on charity, remarked, "That sermon so strongly proves the necessity of alms-giving that I've almost a mind to beg."

A WEARY TRAVELLER.—A travelling marquis, in the course of the "grand tour," arrived at Berlin, weary of Honoring. When he went to bed, at the close of his first day's residence, he exclaimed, "Thank heaven, I have come to a place where there is nothing worth seeing!"

THE LIVER AND LIGHTS.—"How rapidly they build houses now," said Cornelius to an old acquaintance, as he pointed to a new two-storey house; "they commenced that building only last week, and they are already putting in the lights." "Yea," rejoined his friend, "and the next week they will put in the liver."

TEST OF LOVE.—A writer says that it is a sure test of love when a woman tells a man who is smoking in her presence that she "adores tobacco smoke." Let a man attempt to blow a cloud in the company of a woman who doesn't care a fig for him, and then let him look in her countenance for approbation. If he don't find what Byron calls "silent thunder," then he will prove a very lucky man, and the lady will be more than angel.

A DREAM REALIZED.—Some time during last summer a stranger stopped at a farmhouse and asked permission to stay over night, which was readily granted by the hospitable farmer. A couple of hours after retiring for the night the stranger was taken suddenly and violently ill, and for several days was apparently deranged. On his recovery he informed his host that during his illness he had dreamed three nights in succession that he had discovered in a certain ravine, near the house, under a rock, an earthen crock containing a large amount of silver. At this the old gentleman expressed surprise, and spoke of it as being a very mysterious dream. Afterwards, however, they were walking together in that direction, and the dream was again adverted to by the stranger. An examination was at once pro-

posed by the farmer, to satisfy their curiosity. The rock was soon found, and after brushing the leaves carefully away it was removed, and to their utter amazement there sat a crock full of silver. They took it out and conveyed it secretly to the house, and on examination it was found to contain 200*l.*, which they agreed to divide equally between them. The day after this discovery, as the stranger was about to take his leave, he complained to his benefactor of the inconvenience of carrying so much silver, when an exchange was proposed, the stranger receiving his share in notes. It was not long after the departure of his guest, however, till mine host made another discovery—his 200*l.* in silver was counterfeit, and he had thus been ingeniously swindled out of 100*l.* The story was kept quiet for several months, but it finally leaked out, and we now give it to our readers precisely as we heard it.

WHAT metamorphosis does a washer-woman undergo in the night? She goes to bed a washer-woman and gets up fine linen.

A FACT.—At a school at Walsend, near Newcastle, the master asked a class of boys the meaning of the word "appetite," when, after a short pause, one little boy said, "I know, sir; when I'm eatin' I'm 'appy, and when I'm done I'm tight."

NO FELLERS WANTED.—"I want to buy a sewing-machine," said an old lady, entering a shop. "Do you want a machine with a feller?" inquired the clerk. "Sakes, no! don't want any of your fellers about me."

SEA-SIDE MUSINGS.

Daughter: "Ah! Papa! How sublime it is to contemplate the grandness, and vastness, of the mighty deep!"

Papa: "Yes, my dear. We get such nice fish and oysters from the water! And then it gives me always such a ravenous appetite!"

THE INTELLIGENT JURY.—A Yorkshire jury, on being told by the judge to "retire to their room and find and bring in a verdict," "retired" accordingly, and after some time came into court and declared that they had "searched the room all over, and peered into every crack and corner, and couldn't find anything that looked like a verdict."

THE PRINCIPLE OF LOVE.—A clergyman, in struggling to explain the warming, vivifying influence of divine love in the heart of man, at last said: "Why, love is the elementary principle of warmth and life, as may be seen by the fact that on the coldest winter day a loving young couple will be all aglow in a room in which a frosty old bachelor would freeze to death."

MILITARY DIGNITY.—A gentleman travelling in the provinces lately entered a village where he saw a large body of militia being drilled by someone who was invisible. Coming closer, he found, to his intense amusement, that the officer was actually sitting down in his shop. It appears that, finding it too hot in the sun, he mustered his men opposite to his place of business, where he entered, and continued the drill under circumstances more consonant with his own comfort.

A JUDGE IN A CURIOUS PICKLE.—Baron Platt, when once visiting a penal institution, inspected the treadmill, and philanthropically trusted himself on it, desiring the warden to set it in motion. The machine was accordingly adjusted, and his lordship began to lift his feet. In a few minutes, however, he called to be released. "Please, my lord," said the man, "you can't get off. It's set for twenty minutes; that's the shortest time we can make it go." So the judge was in duress until his "term" expired.

RAISING THE WIND.—In a country town near Dundee a number of "dronthy cronies" met in a house and sat and drank so long that their funds were exhausted. Various schemes for raising the wind were proposed, and the possibility of raising another half mutchkin seemed almost as hopeless a case as that of raising the dead, when a bright idea entered the imagination of one of them. His wife kept a "wee pawn," or broker's shop, and, stripping off his coat, he gave it to another: "Here, Tam, tak' that to my wife and see fat sh'll gie ye for it. Never mind, but just tak' fat ye got, an' I'll get my coat in the morning. Tam went away on his errand, and shortly after returned with the price of another gill or two, in consuming which they enjoyed a hearty laugh at the wife buying her husband's coat.

JUSTICE, HER SCALES, AND OTHER PEOPLE'S.

"Weights and Measures in Holborn.—Yesterday nine persons trading in the Holborn District were fined before the Justices of the Special Sessions held at the Freemasons' Tavern, Mr. J. Fysh Pownall in the chair. One licensed victualler, one beer retailer, one flour and corn dealer, one cheesemonger,

two greengrocers, one chandler, one potato dealer, and one dealer in rabbits. The maximum fine was 12 1/2s., and the minimum, 5s.—*Wednesday's Times*.

A minimum of five shillings! Ah, Mr. Pownall, why didn't you make it a pound-all? And please why don't you give us the "names, weights, and colours" of the deriders—who laugh Justice to scorn, and falsify her scales on the sly?—*Punch*.

"FOR BETTER FOR WORSE."

Our friend Snagbids (hasn't a rap) has just married the widow (rich) of old Harleiden, the stockbroker.

Mrs. E. (Retiring): "Shall I send my Poppet his slippers?"

Mrs. E.: "N-n-n-o—not at present, thanks" (Softly voice to his guest when the door was closed.) "Not so fond of having the mussels on my feet at eight o'clock in the evening, you know, Barney!"—*Punch*.

CHANGE OF NAME.—Barrow-in-Furness, noticed lately for its Dukes and Docks, has extensive iron and steel works. Ought it not to be called Barrow-in-Furness?—*Punch*.

A BAD SEASON.

Sportswoman: "I can assure you, what with the rent of the Moor, and my expenses, and 'what not,' the birds have cost me—ah—a sovereign apiece."

Keeper: "A' weel, sir! 'Deed it's a maircy ye didna kill mair o' 'em!"—*Punch*.

A-LA-MODE.

WHAT perils ladies will encounter to be in fashion! They are generally supposed to show timidity in the presence of wild cattle, but they would rather face a mad bull than not have their dresses gored.—*Punch*.

A QUERY FOR MR. HALLI-WELL.—Shakespeare says, "All's well that ends well." Must we not consider Han-well and Bride-well exceptions to this rule?—*Fun*.

RIGHT ON THAT HEAD.

Mr. Shallowbrains: "I don't want to underpay you, my man. What I want is a simple understanding."

Cobby: "Yes, yer looked as if yer wanted that."—*Fun*.

STEP IT!—Dancing, in connection with comic singing, is so alarmingly on the increase in the theatres and music-halls, that it will soon become necessary to insert the proviso in the programmes—"wind permitting."—*Fun*.

THE HEALTH OF LONDON.—The cabmen say that after the first of November there will be a considerable reduction in the diseases of London, as the new Metropolitan Act will on that day abolish the tizzy—they have been so long afflicted with.—*Fun*.

AN ARTISTIC WAGON.—The papers state that a large bed of paint of various colours and of superior quality has just been discovered in Michigan; it is said to be three miles in length. An artist of our acquaintance declares that he will "lay his palette;" there's no truth in the report.—*Fun*.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

GREEN TOMATOES TO RESEMBLE INDIA SWEETMEATS.—Take small plum or pear shaped tomatoes, when perfectly green. Weigh them. Allow a pound of loaf-sugar to one of fruit; add the juice of one lemon, and enough water with the juice to allow a pint of fluid to every two pounds of sugar. Put in a preserving kettle the lemon-peel and pulp, chopped fine, but not the seeds, and a handful of ginger-root; boil these until the water is highly flavoured. Then, while hot, throw in a handful of peach leaves. Let it remain in the kettle, if a porcelain one, until morning; if brass, pour it into an earthen dish. The next morning strain the water; pick out the lemon and ginger, and throw it back in the water. Line the kettle with grape leaves, and lay in the tomatoes; cover with leaves, and add another layer, until the whole are in. Then pour over them hot, but not boiling water. Set the kettle where it will heat gradually; when hot, but before the fruit breaks, take it from the fire. Let them cool; and heat again and again until green. The best way to heat them is over hot water. Then strain the water containing lemon and ginger, and, if not highly flavoured, boil it again before straining. There should be a pint of water to every four pounds of sugar. If too much boil it away. After it is strained mix the sugar and lemon juice with it. Let it boil up and skim it. Then remove the tomatoes from the grape leaves; wash them, and roll in a towel gently without breaking. Prick them two or three times with a coarse needle. Cool the sirup, and put them in; set the kettle over water; let them simmer until the sugar has penetrated them. Remove the kettle, let them remain over night in the sirup. In the latter part of the forenoon put them over again. Let them

nearily boil, take them off the fire, and set them on hot water an hour. Then skim them out. Boil and skim the sirup; when no scum arises, put them back; let them boil up, and put them in the jars. Cover with paper wet with egg. If you have preserved ginger or ginger root, and a strong extract of lemon, put the peach leaves in water, and scald them. Pour the water on the tomatoes hot; let them remain over a kettle of water an hour. Then put them in the grape leaves, as directed. Heat the sugar and lemon juice over water. Blanch a dozen peach pits to every jar; lay them in the sirup, cook the tomatoes in the sirup as directed; cut up the ginger, and put it in the jars, and add a tablespoonful, or more if needed, of lemon extract to each jar. The sirup will be much lighter made with extract and preserves. Extract of cinnamon would do also, and tartaric or citric acid instead of lemon juice. This will be found a beautiful sweetmeat resembling the India Sweetmeats.

TO A WALL-FLOWER GROWING BY A RUINOUS CASTLE.

Wild flower! that o'er the ruin gray
Bloomest when all are gone—
Since power and pride have passed away
Why lingerest thou alone?
The only thing the eye can see
That speaks not of inconstancy?

Where once the harp's sweet tones were heard,
The passing wind blows high,
Or there, perchance, some wandering bird
Sings its wild melody;
And here, where beauty used to lead
The joyous dance, I mark the weed.
The busy crowd will never come
Thy ruddy leaves to view,
Swept by the breeze upon a dome
Where once the banner flew:
No! they have fled, with changing times,
To gayer scenes—to other climes.

The ivy here hath long grown wild,
Where olden records say
The laurel lived—the rosebud smiled,
But these have passed away,
And thou alone dost now remain
Contenting with its silent reign.
The flower of the gay parterre
Is sown and sheltered too;
But where's the hand that placed thee there,
Or saved when tempests blew?
We see it not, but yet can tell
That thou hast bloomed and braved them well.
Then can it be accounted strange,
Regard for thee to feel?
No! in a world, where friends will change
As changeful Fortune's wheel,
'Tis ever happiness to see
A flower that emblems constancy.

J. W. L.

GEMS.

EVERY art is best taught by example; good deeds produce good friends.

The wise man is happy when he gains his own approbation, the fool when he gains that of others.

The flower of youth never looks so lovely as when it bends to the sun of righteousness.

The sun in parting thrills the heavens, as one's soul is thrilled in the hour of separation.

We must pass through this world to unlock the mysteries of the next, and it is only in the next that we can find a key to unlock the mysteries of this.

EVERYTHING may be mimicked by hypocrisy, but humility and love united. The more rare the more radiant when they meet.

HASTE not to get rich, for death stalketh abroad at all hours, and will encounter the unware. The high, the low, the poor, and affluent, the righteous, as well as the unrighteous, are all alike to death, for his inexorable scythe levels all social distinctions.

CLEANLINESS of person promotes health of body, and this in turn naturally begets purity of mind and moral elevation. Such persons are quite as much concerned in having the inner and unseen as tidy and as clean as the outer and the visible; they are pure from principle, not policy.

THE NICOBAR ISLANDS.—H.M.S. Wasp recently visited the Nicobar Islands, where it is alleged the crew of an English ship had been murdered. Some of the chiefs who went on board were kept in custody,

and on examination elicited the fact that for years past the natives had murdered, with circumstances of the most revolting barbarity, the crews of all vessels that had been wrecked off their coasts. They had, however, saved one European woman and child, who were still living in the chief island; the woman subjected to the grossest degradation. Most of the natives could speak a few English words, and several of them called themselves by English titles. One announced himself as "Sir John Nicholls," another as "Lord Palmerston," but the favourite prefix was captain. A party of the Wasp landed and scoured the island as far as practicable, but the islanders had all retreated into the interior, and none of them could be found. It was then determined to make Lord Palmerston (who was one of those detained on board) an ambassador to his countrymen in the interior. He was put on shore with a promise of a hundred bottles of rum and sundry other tempting presents if he brought back information of the woman, and threats of punishment on the whole island if he did not return. But neither the rum nor the threats induced his lordship to show his face again; and the Wasp, unable to obtain any farther information, returned with the remaining prisoners to Singapore for instructions. The government decided upon empowering Captain Bedingfield to proceed against the islanders at his discretion, and ordered H.M.S. Satellite and a party of native troops to accompany him. The expedition left Penang on the 18th of July last.

STATISTICS.

In Africa the Baron de Duken fixes the level of perpetual snow at 5,200 metres. In South America, as in the Cordilleras, at 4,600 to 4,800 metres. In the Rocky Mountains the snow disappears up to 3,800 metres above the sea level. The greatest height of snow level in Asia is on the south of Karakorum at 5,800 metres. Caucasus, 3,200 to 3,300 metres; Appennines, 2,900 metres; Alps, from 2,600 to 2,700 metres, on the northern side, and about 3,000 metres on the southern sides of Monte Rosa and Mont Blanc. For the Central Alps 2,750 to 2,800 metres is given. In the Alps of Styria and the Tyrol the level is about 2,600 metres. For the Pyrenees, on the Spanish side, the snow nearly disappears every year; on the opposite side 2,700 to 2,800 metres. In Sweden the level descends to 1,500 metres, to 970 metres in Iceland, to 700 at Cape North, and to 300 at Spitzbergen.

MISCELLANEOUS.

AN EXPEDITION TO MEXICO.—Santa Anna's son is organizing an expedition at Havannah to invade Mexico, to liberate his father, still imprisoned.

THE CAPITAL OF POLAND.—In order to destroy as much as possible all historical recollections among the Poles, it has been determined that Warsaw shall cease to be the capital of Poland.

AMERICAN PEACHES.—Accounts from Southern Illinois represent the peach crop to be enormous in that section. It is no uncommon thing to ship from 16,000 to 20,000 boxes a day over the Illinois Central.

VALUE OF THE COFFEE BERRY.—It has recently been found that the fumes from roasting coffee are a most powerful deodorant and disinfectant; whatever infection or contagion may be feared, the roaster, containing the heated berry, is to be carried through the rooms, and the fumes escaping are said entirely to destroy animal and vegetable effluvia.

THE TREASURY "DEPOSITORY."—In the Solicitor's Department of the Treasury is an apartment called the lumber-room. Besides title deeds, which have been smouldering there for years, a large quantity of valuable property found upon persons who have died in the streets, or whose bodies have not been identified, is also stowed away in this "depository." It is proposed to advertize for the owners of the property, and in default of claims to sell it by public auction.

SWIMMING-LAKE AT WORTHING.—There is a design to make Worthing peculiar or original by providing it with two artificial sea-water swimming-lakes, one for ladies and the other for gentlemen, with hot, shower, Turkish, and vapour baths; waiting, reading, and refreshment rooms, conservatory promenade, or "spacious crystal ways to the lakes," and public hall. The total expense is estimated at 22,000*l.* and the total profits at 7,640*l.* per annum; working expenses, 2,000*l.*; net income, 5,650*l.* per annum, or a profit of more than 25 per cent. The site proposed is the large space of open ground lying between the sea and the south end of East Street, and the scheme would cover 2½ acres of ground.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MARTIN.—The cenotaph means a monument raised to some one elsewhere buried.

GERMANY.—Joshua Wedgwood, the potter, was born in 1730, and died in 1795.

JUSTIN.—Walter Savage Landor, the writer and poet, was born in 1775, and died in 1864.

A. G.—The title of "Prince Consort" was conferred on H.R.H. the late Prince Albert in the year 1857. He was born in 1819.

AMICE GREEN.—The eldest son of the deceased son is the heir to his late grandfather's freehold—not the living younger son.

E. F. M. B.—If you have not obtained an order for payment from a magistrate, you cannot under your special circumstances sue for the money. See our reply to "A. B."

S. H.—We really never heard of a disease called *leperia*, and therefore do not know what to recommend for its cure.

D. S.—Of course by Scotch law a Protestant can marry a Roman Catholic. You ask, "If so, how should they go about it?" Firstly, go to Scotland, then ask a clergyman.

RICHMOND.—See Lover's ballad of the "Four-leaved Shamrock;" therein you will find the superstition to which you allude.

DONALD.—The penalty for giving a receipt without a stamp is 10s. for any sum under 100s., and 20s. above that sum.

ROBERT.—It was in 1836 that the stamp duty on newspapers was reduced to one penny, and it was in 1814 that the *Times* was first printed by steam.

FRANCY.—There are only three Field-Marshal in the British Army—viz., the Duke of Cambridge, Sir Edward Blyden, and Viscount Gough.

A. A.—We cannot advise on an agreement which we cannot read. Consult a solicitor if you think you have any claim. To advise you otherwise might be to lead you into trouble.

A. A. (Blacksmith).—We really cannot pretend to advise a blacksmith how to harden iron. We have always understood that this was effected by plunging the red-hot iron into cold water.

J. FAYRE.—A person under age is not liable for money borrowed upon a bill of exchange, even though the cash were actually expended in the purchase of such articles as would be deemed necessities.

VINCENT.—*Luff* is a maritime term, used when ordering the helmsman to put the tiller on the lee side, in order to make the ship sail nearer the wind; it also designates the roundest part of the bow of the ship.

ANNA.—A good thing for clearing the complexion is a mixture of equal parts of magnesia and precipitated sulphur; a teaspoonful should be taken in a little milk before breakfast once a week for a month.

A. STURDENT.—William the Silent, Prince of Orange, was assassinated by Balthazar Gerard, Nov. 6, 1650; Henry IV. of France by Ravalliac, May 14, 1610; and President Lincoln by Booth, April 15, 1865.

A. SUFFERER.—There is a Dispensary for Diseases of the Skin, under the presidency of the Rev. Canon Dale, in Duke Street, Manchester Square. Apply between the hours of nine and ten a.m. Patients who cannot procure a ticket from a governor must pay 1s. per week.

AURELIA.—1. Let the material from which you wish to remove the stain imbibe a little water without dripping, and then hold the part over a lighted match at a little distance. The sulphurous gas will remove the stain. 2. Handwriting distinct and ladylike.

E. L. D.—Your better course would be to apply to the magistrate who ordered the defendant to make to you the monthly payments. That official can be the only judge of your case, and he will, without doubt, do you justice on the merits of that case.

A WIDOW.—To get a child into the London Orphan Asylum, Clapton, you must obtain the votes of the subscribers. To do this you should apply to the secretary of the institution, No. 1, St. Helen's Place, E.C., for a list of subscribers. Orphans are eligible between the ages of seven and eleven, and are retained until the age of fifteen.

A BRIDE.—Resolve every morning to be cheerful through the day, and should anything occur to break your resolution suffer it not to put you out of temper with your husband; dispute not with him, be the occasion what it may, but rather decay yourself the satisfaction of having your own will, or of gaining the better of an argument, than risk a quarrel which it is impossible to see the end of. Implicit

submission in a man to his wife is ever disgraceful to both, but implicit submission in a wife to the just will of her husband is what she promised at the altar, what the good will reverse her for, and is in fact the greatest honour she can receive. Be assured a woman's power as well as her happiness has no other foundation than her husband's esteem and love, which it is his interest by all possible means to preserve and increase.

A. B.—It is generally believed that the putative father must be sworn to before a magistrate within twelve months of the child's birth. Your safer course, however, would be to put the question to a solicitor; or, cheaper still, ask the officials at the police court.

W. W. G.—1. You cannot recover a debt above 50s. in the County Court. You talk of an I. O. U. being six months due. If you have made it payable at any particular period it is worthless, unless stamped as a promissory note. 2. Handwriting, &c., not to be blamed.

A FENIAN, *Silly Boy* should have been his signature, asks us whether it be injurious to the health to sleep in a room ranging from 50 to 75 deg. of heat. If "A Fenian," being a youth especially, has any regard for his health he will sleep all the year round with his bedroom window open, a practice now almost universal at the great hospitals.

MARY S. requests us to tell her of a good investment for her savings. Avoid companies and persons advertising for loans on good security. The latter are most frequently swindlers, and the former precarious. If you are not satisfied with government interest (at the savings bank or in Consols) go to any respectable solicitor who will obtain for you 5 per cent. on landed security.

G. C.—1. Put some walnuts into jars, cover them with strong, cold vinegar, and tie down closely for about a year, then take out the walnuts, and to every gallon of liquor put two heads of garlic, half a pound of anchovies, a quart of red wine, an ounce each of mace and cloves, long, black, and Jamaica pepper and ginger; boil all together till the liquor be reduced to half the quantity, and the next day bottle it for use; the longer it is kept the better it will be. 2. To preserve all kinds of fish place it in jars, and cover with salad-oil, adding a little spice, cork well down, making the jars perfectly air-tight.

MAKE BELIEVE

Kiss me, though you make believe—

Kiss me, though I almost know

You are kissing to deceive:

Let this one moment flow

Backward, ere it rise and break,

Only for poor pity's sake!

Give me of your flowers one leaf!

Give me of your smiles one smile:

Backward roll this tide of grief

Just a moment, though the while

I should feel and almost know

You are trifling with my woe!

Whisper to me sweet and low—

Tell me how you sit and weave

Dreams about us, though I know

It is only make believe!

Just a moment, though 'tis plain

You are jesting with my pain.

A. C.

S. W. asks us "How to obtain a loan on a life policy that has been insured over four years." "S. W." will find the task difficult if not impossible; at the same time he can apply to the secretary of the company which issued the policy. It is in fact, to the best of our belief, his only source.

WILLIAM STANDT.—1. We have several times answered your two first queries as length, recently in our last number, and previously in No. 138 of *THE LONDON READER*. 2. A special licence costs 30s., and this will permit of a legal marriage between the contracting parties any hour, day, or night, at any place.

O. BELL.—Wagon-boats are built of white fir, cedar, or mahogany; their average length is slightly over thirty feet, and about one foot in breadth. Being constructed of very slight material, they are very light in weight, thirty-five pounds being about the average.

MAY.—Stains and spots may be taken out of mahogany by the use of a little aquafortis or oxalic acid and water, rubbing the part with the liquid by means of a cork till the colour is restored, observing afterwards to well wash the wood, and then to dry and polish as usual.

MACDONALD.—The difference as regards doctrine and discipline between the Roman and Greek churches is not very great; the latter acknowledges the spiritual supremacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople, the former of the Pope. The separation occurred in the early age of Christianity.

LILY.—A good way to sweeten bad butter is to dissolve it thoroughly in hot water, let it cool, then skim it off, and churn again, adding a little salt and sugar; a small quantity can be tried first, and, if approved, then a larger one. The water should be merely hot enough to melt the butter, or it will become oily.

CECELIA.—*Notes* in music is a term applied to a character used to contradict the flats or sharps placed at the beginning of the stave or elsewhere. It is also applied to the two keys C major and A minor, because they do not require either sharps or flats in the formation of their proper intervals.

ROSENA.—The first English duke was the Black Prince, whom his father created in Parliament Duke of Cornwall, in 1337. The first English marquis was Robert de Vere, Earl of Oxford, who by Richard II. was created Marquis of Dublin. The title of earl was derived from the Saxon word *Eardoman*, but under their regime they performed the duties of modern sheriffs.

HERBERT.—You are right; frugality is good if liberality be joined with it. The first impulses leaving off all superfluous expenses, the last is the bestowing of a portion of our means towards the benefit of others who need it. The first without the last is covetousness, the last without the first being prodigality; united they constitute a good disposition, and happy will be the home where they are both found.

CORDELIA.—Who indeed does not remember the joyous feelings arising in their minds on meeting old familiar faces, the cordial grasp of the hand, and the hearty congratulations for happy rhymes whose cause stealing upon us as we look upon the faces of those we loved in other days, and from

whom we have been separated for years, and who return again with all the changes of time and thought upon their brows; but when those we love and cherish leave us for ever, when their spirits pass away from earth to heaven, who would not give all on earth for a picture, or the faintest resemblance of their features? It is sad indeed when they descend into the tomb, leaving not a shadow of their loveliness behind.

A. CONSTANT READER.—The age for clerks in the solicitor's office in the Customs is from seventeen to twenty-five, and for the other departments twenty to twenty-five. The examination for candidates consists of handwriting and orthography, arithmetic (including vulgar and decimal fractions), English composition, geography, English history; and for the clerks in the solicitor's office Latin is also required.

ELLEN.—Many people will not begin to save because the sum they have to begin with is so small; but never mind if it be only a penny, commence at once, put it by, do not touch it, you will add another to it in time, and by this means pennies will grow into shillings, and shillings into pounds. The practice of saving even a penny will begin the habit, and the adding of other pennies will educate the habit until the system of economy becomes confirmed, and the indulgence of it necessary to personal happiness.

LAURENCE.—Any Court of Referees may examine witnesses upon oath upon matters relating to any Bill which they may under any standing order, or other order of the House of Commons, be empowered to inquire into, and for that purpose may administer an oath to any such witness. For false evidence the parties will be liable to the penalties of perjury. With regard to costs, any Court of Referees on Private Bills, in cases authorized to inquire into the whole matter, may award costs in the same manner as Select Committees on Private Bills.

A WOUND-BE SOLDIER.—1. The prices of a captain's commission in the regiments you mention are as follows: Life Guards, 3,500s.; Foot Guards, 4,800s.; Cavalry and Infantry of the Line, 1,800s.; Dragoon Guards and Dragoons, 3,250s. These prices, however, do not represent the whole cost, for there is an additional fancy price—that is, a sum paid to an officer who "sells out" in addition to the regulation price. This price will vary according to whether the regiment is on home or foreign service. 2. A cornet's commission in the Life Guards is 1,200s., and in the Dragoons 850s. 3. An ensign's in the Foot Guards costs 1,300s.; in the line, 450s.

LILY N., eighteen, tall, brown hair, gray eyes, tall, not bad looking, domesticated, and used to business.

AN OFFICER'S DAUGHTER, middle age, amiable, has property, and 70s. a year.

LESLIE D., twenty-two, medium height, ashen hair, brown eyes, fair, and very domesticated. Respondent must be a respectable tradesman and dark.

FANNY, nineteen, medium height, fair, light hair, blue eyes, and very domesticated. Respondent must be about nineteen, tall, dark, and fond of home.

MAGGIE, domesticated, with some property. Respondent must be tall, thoroughly respectable, not under forty, and in comfortable circumstances.

HARRY M., eighteen, tall, red hair, domesticated, and fond of business. Respondent must be seventeen, tall, and good looking.

J. HENRY, twenty-five, medium stature, tall, fair, good looking, and an income of 700s. Respondent must be good looking, amiable, affectionate, and not over twenty-four.

N. B. (a professional man), tall, dark, and gentlemanly, with sufficient income to support a wife in respectability. Respondent must be from eighteen to twenty-five, and well educated.

HELENA, thirty, tall, dark, a fine figure, thoroughly domesticated, and has a small fortune, which she would like settled on herself. Respondent must be about thirty or forty; a dark gentleman preferred.

MARY and LESLIE. "Mary," twenty-five, 4 ft. 10 in., a brunette, dark blue eyes, and chestnut hair. "Leslie," twenty-four, 5 ft. 3 in., a blonde, blue eyes, golden hair, good tempered, and domesticated. Respondents must be dark, and respectable mechanics.

GENTLEMAN JACK, twenty, 5 ft. 8 in., dark blue eyes, whiskers and moustache, fond of home, with 150s. a year, and a Roman Catholic. Respondent must be about twenty, tall, good figure, ladylike, well educated, fond of music, and thoroughly domesticated; dark hair and eyes preferred. (Handwriting good, clear, and distinct. A few more attempts in the poetic line may probably produce improvement; the present lines are too crude.)

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

WM. E. is responded to by—"Alone," forty-two, a member of the Church of England, and has money.

W. L. G. by—"Emmie," 5 ft. 3 in., good looking, light hair and gray eyes.

WILLIAM CHARLES by—"J. Jones," between sixteen and seventeen, 5 ft. 1 in., light hair, fair, blue eyes, and thoroughly domesticated; and—"Elizabeth A.," seventeen, medium height, brown hair, gray eyes, well educated, and respectfully connected.

MARGUS by—"Nellie," medium height, fair, rather stout, agreeable, and good tempered.

W. A. by—"A. Constant Reader," about seventeen, 5 ft. 6 in., blue eyes, light hair, and handsome. JULIA and MADRINE by—"Edward" and "Mark" (companions), both tall, dark, well educated, and have incomes of 400s.

PART LIV., FOR NOVEMBER, IS NOW READY. PRICE 6d.

"* Now Ready, VOL. IX. OF THE LONDON READER. PRICE 4s. 6d.

Also, the TITLE AND INDEX TO VOL. IX. PRICE ONE PENNY.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 334, Strand, W.C.

† We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

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